

# S E R M O N S

ON

Various Subjects,

DIVINE and MORAL:

WITH A

SACRED HYMN

Suited to each SUBJECT.

Design'd for the Use of CHRISTIAN FAMILIES,  
as well as for the Hours of DEVOUT  
RETIREMENT.

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By I. WATTS, D. D.

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VOL. II.

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The Sixth EDITION.

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# SERMONS

ON

VARIOUS TOPICS

DEALING WITH MORAL

SIN

DELIVERED BY THE REV. J. W. WATTS, D.D.,  
AT THE HOME OF DEVOUT  
RETIREMENT.

BY J. W. WATTS, D.D.

VOL. II.

THE GREAT DIVINE

THE GREAT DIVINE



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# S E R M O N S

O N

*Various Subjects, &c.*

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V O L. II.

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## S E R M O N XXIII.

Christian Morality, *viz.* Gravity,  
Decency, &c.

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P H I L I P. iv. 8.

*Whatsoever Things are honest, or grave, &c.  
think on these Things.*

*Ὅσα σεμνά, &c.*

**S**INCE the Translation of the Bible into the *English* Tongue is so excellent a Performance in itself, and so necessary a Service to the Church, I feel a sensible Regret whensoever there is occasion to complain of it, or to correct it. In the main, I may venture to say boldly, it teaches us all the necessary Doctrines and Duties of Christianity.

Vol. II. B anity



anity in a very ample and compleat manner, and sets them in an evident Light: And what the Spirit of God spoke in ancient Times in *Greek* and *Hebrew*, is sufficiently manifested to us for our Salvation in the *English Bible*.

But in this Part of the Verse, which I am now to discourse of, the Word which we render *honest*, is not so well translated as I could wish; for *Honesty* is contained in the Words *true* and *just*, which go before, and follow my Text. But the *Greek* *σεμνός*, more properly signifies, *grave*, *decent*, or *venerable*; and so you find it in the *Margin*, which will oftentimes help you, when the Word in the *English Text* is not so expressive of the original Sense. The same Word *σεμνός* is render'd *grave* in several other places of Scripture: 'Tis three times so expressed in the third Chapter of the first Epistle to *Timothy*, ver. 8. *The Deacons must be grave*. Ver. 11. *Their Wives also must be grave*. Ver. 5. *A Bishop must have his Children in Subjection with all gravity*.

'Tis a Word that is used in *Greek* Authors to represent the Character of an *aged Man*, a *Philosopher*, or a *Magistrate*, among the Heathens. It carries in it the Idea of an *honourable Gravity*, and a *venerable Decency* of Behaviour; and this is what the Apostle recommends to the Practice of Christians. 'Tis as if he had said, "The Character of every common Christian should have something in it so *honourable*, as may command a sort of *Veneration* and *Respect* from all Persons they converse with, as much as the Character of a *wise old Man*, a *Magistrate*, or a *Philosopher*, does in the Heathen World."

To improve this Subject, I shall shew,

- I. Wherein this *Gravity* consists.
- II. How the Light of Nature recommends it.
- III. How the Gospel inforces it.
- IV. Lay down a Direction or two, in order to obtain it.

First,





Serm. XXIII. Gravity, Decency, &c. 3

First, This Gravity and venerable Decency which the Apostle recommends in my Text, may be supposed to consist in these three things.

1. A Moderation and Decency in our Apparel.
2. A Gravity and Sobriety in our Speech and Conversation.
3. Honour, Decency, and Dignity in our whole Deportment and Behaviour.

I. *A Moderation and Decency in our Apparel*, such as becomes the Profession of Persons whose chief Ornament is Religion and Godliness. This the Apostles, both St. Peter and St. Paul, each in their turn, insist upon, as a necessary Qualification of Women who profess Christianity, and as an Ornament to the Doctrine of the Gospel of Christ. 1 Pet. iii. 3, 4, 5. *Let your Conversation be with Fear; whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the Hair, and wearing of Gold.* 1 Tim. ii. 9, 10. The Apostle Paul bids Timothy the young Evangelist teach the same Doctrine and Practice, *In like manner I will that Women adorn themselves in modest Apparel with Shamefacedness and Sobriety, as becometh Women professing Godliness.* Not that all Christians must utterly abandon those richer and more costly Methods of Ornament, Gold or Pearls, which the Apostle there makes mention of; for every one of us should wear such Raiment as suits our Character and our Age, our Company and Business in the World: But let not these be our chief Ornaments, still remembering that *we are Christians*; and let our Apparel, as well as our Conversation, shew that we despise Trifles, and thus maintain the Dignity of our high and holy Calling.

Here, saith a \* learned Commentator, " 'tis worthy to be noted by the Women, that this Precept ought not to be slighted by them, as of lit-

\* Dr. Whitby.

“ the moment, seeing it is so carefully inculcated by  
 “ the two chief Apostles of the *Jew* and *Gentile*, St.  
 “ *Peter* and St. *Paul*; and the contrary is represent-  
 “ ed as a Practice opposite to Godliness.”

Nor while you are *dressing*, should you forget that you are *Sinners*, and therefore should put on *Shamefacedness*; for all our Ornaments and Cloathing are but a Memorial of our first Sin and Shame. And when we take a Pride in our Garments, it looks as if we had forgotten the Original of them, *the Loss of our Innocency*.

Nor is this sort of Advice to be confined to the Female World: For, as the same Author expresses it, “ If it be so unbecoming a *Christian Woman* to be  
 “ thus concerned in adorning and tricking up her  
 “ Body, it must be much more unbecoming a *Chri-*  
 “ *stian Man*, and that which makes him truly to de-  
 “ serve the Name of a *Fop*.”

’Tis a Token of a light and vain Mind to be too fond of gaudy Habits, a Mind not much affected with Sin or with Salvation. Surely Christians are born for greater things, and their Aim should point at higher Excellencies than these are. Let their chief Ornaments be the Graces of the Spirit, and the Virtues of the Heart and Life. A well adorned Body, and a neglected Mind, very ill becomes a Professor of the Gospel.

*Christians* should look like *Strangers* and *Pilgrims* here, and not think themselves undressed, unless they are conformed to all the Niceties and vain Fashions of the World. Sometimes (it may be) we are too much afraid we shall not look like the *Children of this World*, whereas the Apostle advises us rather to look like *Strangers*. We are travelling homeward through a foreign Country, having the Ornaments of *Holiness* on us, which is the Raiment of Heaven. I confess, we are not required to affect *Singularity*, nor to seek a foolish and useless Distinction from the Customs of our Country, where they are proper, innocent;

nocent, and becoming; for *the Kingdom of God does not consist in any affected Peculiarities of Dress or Behaviour*; but let us remember too, that it is below the Glory of our Character, and the Dignity of our Calling, to have our Thoughts uneasy, if every Pin and Point that belongs to our Apparel be not placed in the most fashionable manner; to fret and rage, if every Fold of a Garment be not adjusted in perfect Conformity to the Mode.

Then we may be said to fall short of that *venerable Decency in our Apparel* which Christianity should teach us, when we are *among the first* in any new devised and gaudy Fashions; when we are some of *the foremost* in the Gaieties of the Age: When we *run to the Extremes* of every new Mode, and affect to vie with the vainest of our Sex: When the Business of Dressing is made one of the *most frequent, important, and solemn Enquiries and Concerns of Life*; and when it employs some of our most serious Thoughts, and our warmest Passions: When we indulge a *greater Expence* in Finery than our Circumstances will allow, or our Stations require: When we *waste more Time* in adorning our selves, than the Duties we owe to God or Man will reasonably permit; and especially if we *intrench upon the Hours which should be devoted to sacred Purposes*. I should add also, that then we certainly break in upon Christian Sobriety, when we indulge such sort of Cloathing as in its own Nature becomes a *Temptation to Immodesty*, and brings Fuel to the impure Fire of the Eyes, or of the Heart.

I would not be thought to treat too largely upon this Subject, or handle it too severely; but let us remember, that our biggest Danger in this Age is Excess, and Luxury, and Vanity of Mind: We are pretty secure now-a-days from too great a Carelessness in this Respect.

II. *Gravity and Sobriety in our Speech* is another Part of that honourable Conduct and Character which we

ought to maintain, and to which the holy Apostle invites us. In the second Chapter of *Titus*, ver. 6, 7, 8. you have this Direction of the Apostle to *Titus* the Evangelist, how he ought to behave himself; and what he speaks to him chiefly as a Minister, may be given as a Rule to all Christians whom he must instruct in all Things. *Shewing thy self a Pattern of good Works; in Doctrine, or in Discourse, shewing Uncorruptness, Gravity, and Sincerity, sound Speech that cannot be condemned, that he that is of the contrary Part may be ashamed, having no Evil to say of you.* He gives all the Christians at *Ephesus* the same Advice, *Eph.* iv. 29. *Let no corrupt Communication proceed out of your Mouth, but that which is good to the Use of Edifying, that it may minister Grace unto the Hearers. Talk of something that may improve one another in Knowledge, in Virtue, in Religion: And let each of us be ashamed to think that we have been an Hour or two in each other's Company, and have neither spoke nor heard any thing that is worth Remembrance. How often, after a Visit among Friends, must we take up this just and shameful Complaint, "Alas, I have said nothing for their Improvement, nor heard any thing for my own!"*

In *Ephes.* v. 4. the Apostle there secludes some sort of Conversation from the Lips of Christians, *Neither Filthiness, nor foolish Talking, nor Jesting, which are not convenient*, which are *οὐκ ἀνέκοντα*, not agreeable to our Profession. *Foolish Talking* and *Jesting* are here forbidden, as well as *Filthiness*. By *foolish Talking*, we may suppose such sort of Language to be intended, from which it is impossible any Profit or Advantage should arise to a wise or a good Man. And by *Jesting*, the Apostle here designs such sharp and biting Jestings that wound the Reputation of a Person concerning whom they are spoken. Such a *Turn of Wit*, as the original Word signifies, that at the same time wounds a good Name, and gives a bitter Reproach. Not that every thing pleasantly spoken is supposed



supposed to be unlawful; or that the Apostle any where forbids all manner of *Mirth* and *Jesting in Conversation*; for there are proper Times and Seasons for such sort of Discourse: And there may be valuable Ends in it too, when 'tis innocently used, on purpose to recreate Nature, and refresh the Mind. And how far this may be indulged, I shall have occasion to speak toward the End of this Sermon.

III. Another thing that is included in this Word *Gravity*, is *Honour and Decency in our whole Deportment and Behaviour*. Each of us should be careful to maintain our publick Character as a Christian, with a due Sense of the Dignity of it. Christians should be ashamed to debase the Powers of their Nature, to practise any thing that is sordid and unworthy; nor make the Members of their Flesh, nor the Faculties of their Mind, Slaves to that which is ridiculous or foolish.

How unbecoming is it to see a *Christian* spoil his Countenance, and disfigure a human Face, by practising all the wild and wanton Grimaces of Folly and Madness! To see *Man*, who is made after the Image of the Son of God, distort his Body in the most antick Postures, and give up all the Honours of his Nature to base and senseless Merriment! Surely the Duties of *Christianity* lead us to nothing below the Dignity of *Man*.

Here I would not be mistaken, nor do I pretend that the Gospel requires such a constant *Solemnity of Countenance and Language*, as though we were all *Preachers*, or *always preaching*. There is no need to put on serious Airs at all times: We are not bound to banish Mirth when we become Christians. *Laughter* is a natural Action, and the Faculty was not given to Mankind in vain, nor is the Exercise of it forbidden for ever.

The chief Ends of it seem to be these two; either to *recreate animal Nature* by Expressions of Mirth, or to put *Folly out of Countenance*.

There may be Times to *recreate Nature*, to unbend the Spirits from Business, and to indulge Mirth among our Friends. The wise Man assures us, *There is a Time to laugh* as well as *to mourn*. *There are Times proper for Weeping*, and some Persons may have Times for *Dancing* too, *Eccl. iii. 4*. And in the 19th Verse of the 10th Chapter, the same divine Writer says, *A Feast is made for Laughter*. At the mutual Entertainment of Friends, we may be merry and not sin. Our holy Religion only demands this of us, that we confine our *Mirth* within the *Limits of Virtue*, and take heed lest when we give a Loose to the sprightly Powers of animal Nature, we should transgress the Rules of Piety, or trespass upon Things sacred.

Another Purpose for which *Laughter* was made, is to *reprove and punish Folly*, and put *Vice out of Countenance*. There are seasons wherein a wise Man or a Christian may treat some criminal or silly Characters with *Ridicule* and *Mockery*. *Elijah* the Prophet condescended thus to correct the *Priests* and *Worshippers of Baal*; but this sort of Conversation must by no means be the Business of our Lives, and the daily Work and Labour of our Thoughts and our Tongues. 'Tis *the Heart of a Fool that is in the House of Mirth*, for he would dwell there continually, *Eccles. vii. 4*. If we are always affecting to throw out some Turns of Wit upon every Occurrence of Life, and tack on a Jest to every thing that is spoken; if we interline all our Discourse and Conversation with Merriment, Banter and Joking, 'tis very unworthy of that *Gravity* and *Honour* that belongs to the Christian Life.

The *Second Head* of Discourse which I propos'd, is to prove, that *the Light of Nature, or the Law of Reason, requires something of this Gravity of Speech and Behaviour*;

*Behaviour*; and this is manifest, if we consider the *Nature of Man* in Opposition to the *Brute that perishes*, or the *Growth and Age of Man* in Distinction from *Children and Babes*.

I. If we consider *Man in Opposition to the brutal World*: *Man*, who has a rational Soul, should act conformable to that sublime Principle within him, and not devote himself to a Life of fantastick Humour, or content himself with the Character of an everlasting Trifler. What a poor and contemptible Account is it of any Person to say, he is a *walking Jest*, a meer *living Trifle*? His Thoughts are made up of Vanity and Emptiness, his Voice is Laughter, and his whole Life is composed of Impertinences.

There is a sort of Persons in the World who never think well of themselves but when they are *dress'd in gay Attire*, and hope to command the Respect of Mankind by spreading abroad their own fine Feathers. Their *Raiment* is the brightest and best Thing that belongs to them, and therefore they affect to shew it. There is another sort of Men who value themselves upon their *merry Humour*, and that they can make their Company laugh when they please. But the more refin'd and rational Part of the World value all these Creatures as they do *Peacocks*, or other Animals that imitate the Voice and Actions of Man. They use them as an Entertainment for their Eyes or their Ears, to give a Fit of Diversion, or to pass away a merry Hour. We generally look upon this kind of People as very worthless Things, as something beneath our selves, and as sinking below their own *Species*. We seldom converse with them upon the Level, or to attain any of the nobler Purposes of Life. We only borrow their Wit, or their Folly, their Humour, or their Finery, for a Season of Amusement, and justly despise them when the laughing Hour is at an End. Reason it self tells us, that human Nature was made for something

thing greater and better, for Contemplation and Action much superior to what these trifling Creatures are acquainted with.

Again, 2dly, if we consider *Man as he stands in Distinction from Childhood*, surely a more grave and solemn Carriage becomes him. Children are pleased with painted Toys; gaudy Garments and founding Trifles are their chief Delight. They are entertain'd with little Impertinences, agreeable to their Ignorance and the Weakness of their Age: But 'tis a Shame to a Person of well grown Years to practise the Child for ever. He that devotes himself to a Life of useless Idleness, and treads round the Circle of perpetual Mirth and Amusement, without Profit to himself or the World, is but a *Child in longer Garments*, or an *Infant of larger Size*.

The *third general Head* leads us to consider, *what forcible Arguments Christianity furnishes us with to practise this Sobriety, Gravity and Decency of Behaviour*: And I shall throw them all into a few Expostulations.

1. Do we not *bear the Name of Christ*, a sacred and a venerable Name? And shall we cast Disgrace upon it by any thing that is mean and dishonourable? Do we not profess to be the Followers of a crucify'd *Jesus*, to be Disciples of the Cross? But wherein do we follow him, if we spend our Days in Mirth and Trifling? His Conduct was all holy and heavenly, and we can never look like his Disciples, if our Conversation favour of Earth and Vanity. What a noble Simplicity runs through all his Speeches, through all the Actions and the Behaviour of our blessed Lord? And how little do we imitate him, if we fondly pursue all the gay Follies of Life in our Dress, in our Speech, and in every thing we do? No Glarings of affected Wit, nor insipid Pertness, can add any thing to our Character as Christians.

2. Let



2. Let us remember that we are *the Sons and Daughters of the most high God*. We profess to separate our selves from the Triflings and Impertinences of this World, as well as from the Impiety and Guilt of it; *Come out from among them, saith the Lord, and I will be your Father, and ye shall be my Sons and my Daughters, saith God Almighty*. Surely the Children of a Prince should behave with Solemnity and Honour, when they are in the midst of the lower Orders of Mankind; and the Children of the King of Heaven should remember the Dignity of their Birth, and their high Relation, when they are conversant among the Sons of Earth. Their Carriage indeed should not be proud and haughty to the Men of this World; *Jesus* the only begotten Son was meek and lowly; And there's a sacred Art of maintaining a divine Humility among the meanest of our Fellow-Creatures, without indulging the Practice of any thing mean and ridiculous. Our blessed Lord was a Companion of *Fishermen*, but not of *Mimicks* and publick *Jesters*.

3. Let us think again, that *we are bought with an high and valuable Price*; we are redeemed, not with corruptible things, as Silver and Gold, but with the precious Blood of Christ, as of a Lamb without Blemish and without Spot, 1 Pet. i. 17, 18. And what is it that we are redeemed from? 'Tis from this evil World, and from a vain Conversation. The Son of God has loved us, and washed us in his own Blood, and shall we defile these Souls of ours with the Meannesses of this Life which Christ has cleansed in so rich a Laver? He has made us Kings and Priests unto God and his Father. Let us now and then ask our selves and enquire, Is our Language and our Behaviour becoming such illustrious Names, such Titles, such Honours, as are put upon us by the Father and the Son.

4. Again, Let us review our Profession; *What is our Calling? What is our Design? What is our Hope?* Are we not born from above? Are we not Pilgrims  
and

and Strangers here? Do we not profess to seek a *better Country, that is, an heavenly*? Do we not live for Heaven and Immortality? How unbecoming is it then for Christians to be perpetually light, and vain, and frothy? How unbecoming our holy and heavenly Calling, and our everlasting Hopes? If we are *Children of the Light and of the Day*, let us not live as though we belong'd to the Night and Darkness: *Let us not sleep*, nor trifle as others do, but *watch and be sober*. And especially if our natural Temper be sanguine and sprightly, and incline to assume vain Airs, there is more need of constant Watchfulness over the Heart and Life, and a Bridle upon the Tongue, lest we should speak Indecencies, and be guilty of Folly and Madness.

*Here this Sermon may be divided.*

The last thing I design'd, was to propose *some Directions in order to cure the Levity of the Mind, and to maintain such a decent Gravity in the Course of our Life as becomes the Gospel.*

**DIRECT. I.** *Let us meditate often on the most sublime and the most awful Parts of Christianity; and thro' the Assistance of the Spirit of God, these will be effectual Guards against this Vanity of Temper.*

The sublime Truths of Christianity demand our frequent Review. Let us often rise high in our Thoughts, and let our Faith look far backwards to the eternal Ages before this World was. Let us contemplate the Love of God the Father, in contriving our Salvation, before he stretch'd abroad these Heavens, or laid the Foundations of this Earth. Let us think of the Condescension of his Mercy, when he chose fallen perishing Sinners to be the Objects of his everlasting Love. Let us dwell upon his Compassion to Man, when he appointed his own Son to take Flesh upon him, and to become our Mediator and Sacrifice.

fice. Let us survey with holy Wonder the various Glories of the Son of God, *by whom and for whom all things were made, who upholds all things by the Word of his Power, and who is the express Image of his Father.* Let us behold him consenting to hide all these Honours behind a Veil of Flesh and Blood, walking the Streets of *Jerusalem*, and travelling on Foot thro' the Villages of *Israel*, attended with a few poor despicable Men, or surrounded with the Reproaches of the blaspheming *Jews*. Let us look upon this illustrious Person, who was adored by Angels, *yet unknown and unglorified* among the Sons of Men, and humbled even to Death and the Grave; then gaze on him rising again from the Dead, and *declared to be the Son of God with Power*, exalted at *the Right Hand of the Majesty on high*, and ruling all the Millions of Inhabitants of the visible and invisible Worlds. Surely if our Souls were inur'd to the Meditation of such sublime Wonders as these, we should not easily immerse our selves in Trifles and Fooleries.

Again, Let us meditate on the *more awful Doctrines, the more solemn and dreadful Truths of our Religion*, and these will be an effectual Restraint to a vain Temper of Mind. Let us think on the *Justice of God* manifested in the Destruction of Sinners in all Ages, when it appear'd in a prodigious Flood of Water, and with a Deluge of Ruin testified against the Wickedness of the old World; and when it came down in flaming Fire upon *Sodom* and upon the Cities of the Plain. Let us meditate on the *Wrath of God*, that has been revealed in numerous Instances *against all the Ungodliness and Unrighteousness of Men.* Let us contemplate that divine and *severe Justice*, that appeared in the Sufferings and Death of God's own Son, when *it pleased the Father to bruise him, and to make his Soul an offering for Sin.* Let us think of his Agonies in the Garden, and on the Cross, when he bore the Weight of our Iniquities, and stood in the Place of Sinners. Let us send our Thoughts

Thoughts down to the regions of Death and Hell, and behold the fallen Angels bound in Chains of Darkness, and groaning under present Torments, yet waiting for the Day of greater Vengeance. Let us think with ourselves what Millions of our Fellow-Sinners, the Sons and Daughters of Adam, lie there banish'd from the Presence of the Lord, and tormented with Fire in their Consciences without Remedy, and without Hope, and say, *Why are not we there too?*

Let us often look forward to the awful *Moment of our Death, and the Time of our Departure* from all the flattering Scenes of this present World. This will put a damp upon the vainest Mind, and hang with a painful Weight upon the Sons of Mirth and Levity. This will be a Means to restrain us from that foolish and trifling Behaviour, which otherwise our Tempers might incline us to: And let us remember *the solemn Hour when we must stand before the Tribunal of our Lord Jesus Christ*, divested of all these gaudy Shews of Life, in which we are now ready to pride ourselves, and there we must receive a Sentence without Repeal, which shall send us to Heaven or to Hell at once, and fix our everlasting State. These are Terrors or Glories too solemn to be trifled with; these are Thoughts that will hold our Souls awake and serious; this will preserve that *Gravity of Mind* which becomes a Christian, and keep us in a prepared Temper to fulfil present Duty, and to wait the final Event of all Things.

DIRECT. II. If we would maintain that venerable Decency in our Frame of Spirit, and in our Deportment, which becomes the Gospel, let us *set ourselves about some useful Employment for the Service of God, or our Fellow-Creatures, or for our own best Improvement*. If Satan find the Mind empty of Thought, and the Hands void of all Business, he will be ready to fill them with Temptations to Iniquity and Mischief:  
And



And the Triflers of this World will be ready to seize upon such a Person as a fit Partner for their Imperinences, and allure him into Follies beneath the Dignity of human Nature, and the Character of a Christian.

I have often pitied some of the Descendants of honourable and wealthy Families of both Sexes, the Unhappiness of whose Education has given them nothing to do, nor taught them to employ their Hands or their Minds : Therefore they spend their Hours in *sauntering*, not knowing whither to go, and are at a loss what to do with themselves to wear their Life away. Upon this account they give themselves up sometimes to the mean and scandalous Pleasures of the lowest of the People, and spend their Hours in Chattering and vulgar Merriment. They make the Business of their Dress the Study and Labour of half the Day, and spend another part of it in trifling Discourse and Laughter, and in scattering Jest and Scandal upon their Neighbours or Acquaintance. All these Pieces of Folly and Immorality would be rectified, if they would but find out for themselves some daily and proper Business to be employ'd in. King Solomon, at his leisure Hours, studied *natural* and *moral Philosophy*, he discoursed of the nature of Vegetables, *from the Cedar to the Hyssop, and of Beasts, Birds, and Fishes* ; besides his *Proverbs* and Rules of Prudence for the Government of human Life, 1 *Kings* iv. 32, &c. St. Paul, when he was not employed in his sacred Work, yet he would not be idle ; and having no need to study for his Sermons, which he had by Inspiration, therefore he wrought with his Hands at *Tentmaking*, and maintain'd himself by it : *Not, says he, because we have not Power to eat your Bread while we teach you the Gospel ; but to make ourselves an Example to you.* See *Acts* xviii. 3. and 2 *Thess.* iii. 8, 9. And good Dorcas, when she had no Business of her own, made *Coats and Garments* for the Poor, *Acts* ix. 36, 39. Such honourable

honourable Examples as these deserve our Imitation.

DIRECT. III. *Let us keep a strict Watch over our selves when we indulge Mirth, and set a double Guard upon the Seasons of Recreation and Divertisement.*

The Rules of Religion do not so restrain us from the common Entertainments of Life, as to render us melancholy Creatures and unfit for Company. There is no need to become meer *Mopes* or *Hermits*, in order to be *Christians*. The Gospel does not deprive us of such Joys as belong to our Natures, but it refines and heightens our Delights. It draws our Souls farther away from mean and *brutal* Pleasures, and raises them to *manly* Satisfactions, to Entertainments worthy of a rational Nature, worthy of a Creature that is made in the Image of God. The *innocent Entertainments of Life* are not utterly forbidden to Christians, but are *regulated* by the Gospel.

When we have consider'd and found them to be *lawful*, then they are to be regulated these two ways.

1. All our Recreations and Divertisements must have some valuable End propos'd.

2. We must distinguish the proper Time and Season of them, and confine our Diversions to that Season.

1. *They must always have some valuable End propos'd.* The chief and most useful Design of them is to *make us more chearful and fitter for some Hours or Days of Service afterwards.* Recreation must not be our *Trade* or *Business*, but meerly us'd as a Means to prepare us for the valuable *Businesses of Life.*

The Scripture indeed tells us, that *of every idle Word that Men shall speak, there shall be an Account given in the Day of Judgment,* Matt. xii. 36. And much more of *idle Hours and Actions.* But this doth  
not

not utterly exclude all manner of *Recreations*, or all *Words of Pleasantry*, which may be innocently and properly used upon some Occasions; but whatsoever Words, whatsoever Conversation, whatsoever sort of pleasurable Entertainments, we indulge our selves in, which have no valuable End, no useful Design in them: These will bear but an ill Aspect before the Judgment-Seat of *Christ*. We shall not be able to give a tolerable Account of such *idle Words or Hours* at that Day: and 'tis the Judge himself who tells us so, and adds his *Amen* to it.

'Tis proper more especially for Persons that are of a *melancholy Temper*, or that have perhaps been *overwhelm'd with some bodily Diseases*, or *overloaded with some Sorrows*, or *Cares*, or *Businesses of Life* to give themselves a little Loose or Diversion now and then in delightful Conversation, or other Recreations and Exercises. These may be as useful as a Glass of Wine to refresh Nature, to make the Heart glad, and the Spirits lightsome; for they tend to fit this animal Body of ours for better Service to the Soul in future Duties that God calls us to: And so long as we confine our Recreations to this Design, and keep this End in view, our Words of Pleasantry in private Conversation, and even our Recreations and Diversions that are more publick, may be agreeable to the Mind and Will of God; for 'tis his Will, that our whole Nature, Flesh and Spirit, should be kept in the fittest Frame for Duty. And some Natures are so constituted, that they will hardly be kept in a Temper fit for Duty, without some Divertisements and Recreations. Where this therefore is the End, these Practices can't be called *idle*, that is, *impertinent*, and to *no Purpose*. But where no reasonable Design is proposed, *Sports and Merriments* are hardly to be defended, for all rational Creatures ought to act with a View to some valuable End.

2. Another Regulation which ought to be given to all our Diversions, is this; *We should narrowly watch, lest the Time of our Recreations intrude upon the Hours and Seasons of Business or of Religion.* There is a *Time to laugh*, the Wise Man tells us, as well as a *Time to labour* or to pray; but *Laughter* must be confin'd to its proper Place and proper Time, and not intrench upon the Season where affairs of bigger Importance, and Matters of grave and serious Consequence should be transacted.

Conscience has something to do in *Matters of Recreation* as well as in our religious or civil Affairs: And as it can never be lawful to rob God or our Families of any of the Time that should be devoted to their Service, on purpose to lay it out in Diversion, so neither is it by any means proper to let the *Seasons of Diversion* come too near the *Seasons of Worship*. When a Looſe is given to all the natural Powers in Mirth and Pleasure, they are not so easily recollected all at once for the sacred Service of Religion. Nor should we run hastily away from the Duties of Worship, and plunge our selves into the midst even of innocent Merriment; for this would look as though we were weary of Devotion, and longed to be at play. A wise Christian will divide his Times aright, and make all the Parts of his Conduct to succeed one another in a decent Order.

Besides, the *Hours of Recreation* should not be multiplied by those Persons who have least Need of them; such are Persons of a chearful and healthy Constitution: And they will be used more sparingly by Christians of maturer Age, and longer Standing in Religion.

As a Child grows up toward Man, he leaves off the Impertinences of Infancy, and the Sports and Trifles of Childhood; and as a Man grows up more and more toward a perfect Christian, his Methods of Pleasure will be changed from *light* and *gay*, to that which is *grave* and *solid*.

To



To conclude this Subject, I would mention only *one powerful Motive* to preserve *Christian Gravity*, and that is, that *hereby the Temper of your Spirit will be better prepar'd for every religious Duty*, whether it be Prayer or Praise, and *better fitted to meet every Providence*, whether it be prosperous or afflictive: Whereas those who perpetually indulge a merry Temper of Mind, when a *prosperous Providence attends them*, they are tempted to excessive Vanity and carnal Joy; their Hearts are not filled with Thankfulness to that God from whom their Mercies come, being too thoughtless and regardless of the original Donor. On the other hand, *when Affliction smites them*, they are in danger of despising the Stroke of the Rod, nor does the Correction of their heavenly Father make so deep and useful an Impression upon their Spirits as it ought to do.

When in the Course of our Lives we maintain such a *grave and composed Frame* as becomes a Christian, we find our Hearts more ready for all the Duties of Worship. We are prepared to receive evil Tidings as well as good, and to attend on the Will of God in all his Outgoings of Providence: We are ready to receive Messages of Sorrow, or the Summons of Death, for we are still conversing with God; we keep the invisible World in the Eye of our Faith: And our Spirits are ready prepared to depart from the Flesh, and to meet our God and our Saviour in the unknown Regions of Light and Immortality.





## SERMON XXIV.

Christian Morality, viz. Justice, &c.

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PHILIP. iv. 8.

*Whatsoever Things are true, whatsoever Things are honest, or grave, whatsoever Things are just — think on these Things.*

*Ὅσα ἐστὶ δίκαια —*

**I**N many Parts of the sacred Writings, there appears a very close Connexion of the Subjects which are handled ; a natural Order is observ'd and a beautiful Transition made from one to the other : But this is not to be expected in every Text, nor is it at all necessary that it should be so. When St. Paul enumerates several Virtues or Vices, he sometimes heaps them together, and doth not design any Regularity or natural Order in placing them. Our Commentators therefore in such Cases, when they are once resolved to find these Beauties and Connexions where the holy Writer did not intend them, they oftentimes torture and strain both their own Invention, and the Words of Scripture. Thus, I fear, I should do, if I would attempt to give a Reason why the Apostle in this *Collection of Virtues*, named *Gravity* or *Decency* before *Justice*, which is of so much greater Importance in the Christian Life.

I take them therefore in the Order in which they lie; and having treated of *Truth* and *Gravity*, I proceed now to consider the *third* Piece of Morality which he mentions, that is, *Justice*.

*Whatsoever things are just, think on these things*; let these be the Objects of your Meditation and of your Practice.

And here, if I should entertain you in two Discourses with this single Subject of *Justice*, I hope I shall not exceed the Limits of your Patience? For 'tis what the Apostle frequently insists upon as a Glory to Christianity, that those that profess it be *just* or *righteous*. You who have fixed your Hope on the Grace of God, and have a Design to honour the *Gospel*, to you I would recommend this great Duty of the *Law*, and that in this Method:

- I. I shall endeavour to shew what is the *general Nature* of this *Justice*, and lay down the *universal Rule* of it.
- II. Discover in *various special Instances* what those things are which are *just*, or wherein our *Justice* or *Righteousness* must appear.
- III. I shall give some *Proof* of this great Duty of Justice or Righteousness by the *Light of Nature*, and according to the *Law of Reason*.
- IV. Shew what forcible Influence the *Gospel of Christ* has to recommend *Justice* to your Meditation and Practice.
- V. Propose a few *Directions* how to guard yourselves against *Temptations to Injustice*, or rather point out some of the *chief Springs of Injustice*, that you may avoid them.

And while I proceed in this Work, you will rejoice inwardly if you find your own Consciences sincerely answering to the Characters of this Virtue in any good measure: And if there be any that shall find himself a guilty Sinner, and very deficient in

this Practice, let him be reprov'd, ashamed, and amend.

First then, Let us consider *the Nature of this Justice, and what is the most universal Rule of it.*

In general, *Justice consists in giving to every one their Due.* According to the Stations in which God has placed us, and according to the several Relations in which Providence has join'd us to our Fellow-Creatures, every Person we converse with hath *something due to him*; and this we are bound to pay as *Men*, and much more as *Christians*.

But since Cases and Circumstances are infinite, and 'tis impossible for any Book to contain, or any Man to receive and remember so many special *Rules for Justice*, as there may be occurring Circumstances in the World, which require the Practice of it; our Lord *Jesus Christ* has therefore given us one *short Rule* whereby to judge what is due to every Man, and fitted it to every Purpose, *Mat. vii. 12. All things whatsoever ye would that Men should do unto you, do ye even so to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.*

I confess there may happen in human Affairs some Cases of such exceeding Intricacy and Difficulty, that very few Persons have Skill enough to determine precisely *what is due*, or what would be *strictly just and righteous*: Nor will this Rule infallibly lead us into the perfect Knowledge of it; but even in such Cases, a sincere honest Man consulting his own Conscience, and asking, *What he thought reasonable that his Neighbour, in the like Case, should do to him*, would seldom wander far from strict Justice; and by practising agreeably to this general Law, he would approve his Conduct both in the Sight of God and Men.

Thus our blessed Saviour has set up a Court of Equity in the Breast of every Man. This Rule is easy to be understood, and ready to be apply'd upon every Occasion. The meanest of them may learn and practise it, and the highest are bound to obey it. This is that divine and comprehensive Rule of Justice



Justice or Righteousness, by which you must regulate all your Actions, and give every one their Due : *Do to others, as you'd have them do to you* : Not as an unreasonable Self-love would wish to receive from others, but as your own *Conscience* would think it *reasonable* others should do to you, as I have explain'd it at large in a Sermon on that Text\*.

The *second* Thing propos'd, was to discover in *various Instances what those Things are which are just, or wherein our Righteousness must appear.*

Here it is necessary to distinguish *Justice* into that which belongs to *Magistrates*, and that which belongs to *private Persons*.

That which belongs to *Magistrates* is called *distributive Justice*, because it divides and distributes such Rewards and Punishments *as are due to every one*, according to the Merit or Demerit of the Person ; and this is done either by the Law and Light of Nature, or by the Laws of the Land in which we dwell. Now in this sort of *Justice*, the *general Rule* of our Saviour, of which we have been speaking, is of excellent and constant Use. Let a *Prince* or a *Magistrate* place himself in the Room of a *Subject* or *Inferior*, and ask what is equitable and just that his Governor should practise toward him, and let that be the Measure of his own Conduct toward his Subjects or Inferiors : Let him exercise his Authority according to this sacred Rule of Righteousness.

But in our separate Assemblies we have very little need to speak of the *Duty of Magistrates*, or of *distributive Justice*, since there are very few of that Rank and Order of Men among our Hearers. We have reason to give hearty Thanks to our present Governors, who distribute so much Justice to us, as to give us the Liberty of worshipping God in a manner that differs from theirs.

\* See Vol. III. Serm. 3.

I apply my self therefore immediately to consider that *Justice* which belongs chiefly to *private Persons*, and which is their Duty to practise. This is called *commutative Justice*. This is that Equity of Dealing, that mutual Exchange of Benefits, and *rendering to every one their Due*, which is necessary between Man and Man, in order to the common Welfare of each other. This is that *Justice* that is due from every Person toward his Neighbour, whether he be superior, inferior, or equal: And I think the following Instances which I shall mention, will comprehend most of the Cases wherein the Practice of Justice is requir'd.

I. 'Tis just that we *honour, reverence and respect those who are our Superiors in any kind; whether Parents, Masters, Magistrates, Ministers, or Teachers, or whatsoever other Character of Superiority there be in the natural, the civil, or the religious Life; otherwise we do not pay them their Due.*

Honour and Obedience are due to *Parents*. 'Tis the first Command of the second Table, *Honour thy Father and thy Mother, that thy Days may be long in the Land. Children obey your Parents, for this is right in the Lord*: Manifest your affectionate Duty toward them. Pay all due Submission to their Commands, and all honourable Regard to their Advice.

*Honour the King as supreme*, and other Ministers of Justice as *subordinate to him*, and submit to them in all the just Executions of their Authority: This is due from Subjects to Princes.

*Servants, be obedient to them that are your Masters according to the Flesh, in singleness of Heart as unto Christ, with Good-will, doing Service as to the Lord, and not to Men.* Your faithful, diligent, and chearful Service is their Due.

*Let those that labour in the Word and Doctrine be counted worthy of double Honour, i. e. of Respect and Maintenance*: It is due to them in the Church where they

they are set as *Elders*, if they rule well. I mention these Hints but very briefly, and for the most Part, in the Language of Scripture, as Instances wherein these Characters of Superiourity demand Honour and Duty from Inferiors.

I grant there may be *other Obligations* to respect and honour our Superiors in some of these Cases, besides the mere *Law of Justice*: but this *Law of commutative Justice* that I am now treating of, obliges us to it. The Light of Nature and Scripture both suppose and oblige *Parents* to take care of their *Children*, to advise and instruct, nourish and provide for them; therefore Obedience and Honour becomes their Due. The Command of Submission given to *Subjects*, supposes and obliges *Princes* and *Rulers* to protect and defend them from all Injury. The Precept of chearful and willing Obedience given to *Servants*, supposes and obliges *Masters* to do the same things unto them; that is, to treat them with Goodwill, and chearfully give them their Food and Clothing, or their Wages and Hire, *Eph. vi. 9*. Nature and Scripture suppose *Ministers* and *Teachers* to be capable and willing to give good Advice, Counsel, and Instruction to those who are younger, or who accept of their Teaching; therefore let Respect and Honour be paid where it is due.

'Tis the Foundation and Rule of *commutative Justice* in all these Instances, that whilst *Inferiors* are obliged to pay due Regards to those that are above them, the *Superiors* are equally obliged to confer those Benefits on Persons of a lower Character, which the Law of God, and the Light of Nature require; but some of the Cases I have mention'd, will fall in naturally under the following Particulars.

II. Another Instance of *commutative Justice*, is the particular *Kindness* that is due to near Relations. This is a very beautiful and a pleasant Part of Life, where  
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it is well managed, this affectionate and delightful Exchange of good Turns one for another.

Now that it is due to *near Relatives*, according to the Appointment of God, will be made evident in this manner.

God, the great Creator of all Things, could have produced all Men immediately by his own Power, and have made them arise up in several Successions of Time, without such a Propagation or Dependence one upon another, if he had pleased; and then there would have been none of these tender and engaging Relations of *Father, Son, and Brother*. But the wise Creator hath ordain'd otherwise; he hath appointed such Methods for the Building of Families, and continuing Mankind in the World, as binds every Soul of us by the Ties of Nature to one another, *Acts xvii. 26. Of one Blood hath God made all the Nations of the Earth*. And those that are nearer, a-kin to one another, especially in the same Family, as *Brethren and Sisters*, ought to look upon themselves under more peculiar and mutual Obligations to do Kindnesses to each other in the first Place, according to their Capacity. *The Obligation lies on each Party, because it lies upon the other*. My Brother is bound to love and help me, therefore it's my Duty to help and love my Brother: For a *Brother is born for Adversity*, *Prov. xvii. 17*. 'Tis the sovereign Will of Heaven, that there should be such near Relations, who should be bound by the Law of Creation and Duty to protect, to support and assist one another in a Time of Adversity: This is the Design of God the Creator, in the Course of his Providence, in his Subdivision and Propagation of all the Families of the Earth.

And as it is a Piece of *Justice* to confer this mutual Help which is due to *near Relations*, so there is something of *Justice* too in our distinguishing Acts of Kindness and Assistance according to difference of *Necessity*, and according to difference of *Merit*. I cannot believe



believe I am bound to love or serve every Brother, or every Sister, with *equal* Degree of Affection and Kindness, whatsoever their Character be, whether virtuous or vicious; Nor to bestow *equal Benefits* upon them, where there is not equal Necessity; this can never be of a divine Appointment. And tho' there is some Duty, some Kindness, some Assistance always due to those that are our near Relatives, yet this very *Rule of Justice* obliges us to give more Respect or Love to those that are in themselves more honourable and worthy, and those who merit more at our Hands, may reasonably expect it. This will further appear from the next Particular.

III. Another Instance of Justice is, *Love to those that love us, and Gratitude to those that have done us good.* Those that have been serviceable to us in the Concerns of our Souls, or our Bodies, demand Kindness from us, and Returns of Service, according to their Benefits, and our Capacity.

Let us first take notice of the *Gratitude that is due for spiritual Benefits.* The *Christian Galatians*, who were converted from Idolatry and *Heathenism*, and reconciled to God by the Preaching of St. Paul, had such a powerful and penetrating Sense of their Obligations to him, that *if it were possible*, saith the Apostle, *I bear you record, ye would have plucked out your own Eyes, and given them to me*, Gal. iv. 15. And when the same Apostle writes to *Philemon*, who was converted to the Faith by his Ministry, he gently insinuates the Obligations he was under; *tho' I do not think proper to tell thee*, saith he, *how thou owest unto me even thine own self*, ver. 19. St. Paul speaks upon this Principle in many Places of his Epistles, 1 Cor. ix. 11. *If we have sown unto you spiritual Things, is it a great thing if we should reap your carnal Things?* And when he gives an Account of the Contribution which the Christians of *Macedonia* and *Achaia* made for the poor Saints at *Jerusalem*, he expresses himself thus:

*It hath pleased them verily to make this Contribution, and their Debtors they are: for if the Gentiles have been made Partakers of their spiritual Things, their Duty is also to minister unto them in carnal Things; because it was from the Jews that the Gospel first came forth, and was preached among the Gentiles.*

There is some sort of *Gratitude* due also to those who by their Writings, or more especially by their Conversation or Instructions, have improved our *Understandings*, and added to our *Knowledge in things natural or moral, as well as divine*. There are some Persons in the World, who have advanc'd their Intellectuals in a very sensible manner, by the Company of their Friends, but they have so much of *Pride* and *Self* reigning in them, that they refuse to acknowledge it: They would fain have the World believe, that 'tis the rich Soil of their own Understanding has produc'd this Harvest of it self: They are ambitious and fond to have it thought that their Notions are all their own. Though they plumed themselves with borrow'd Feathers, they are unwilling to confess whence they receiv'd them, and pretend they are owing to Nature only. But *Pride* is a secret Vice, and a cursed *Spring of Injustice* in more Instances than one, as I shall shew hereafter.

After the Benefits bestow'd on our Souls, we ought to consider what is due to those that have served our Bodies, or our *natural Life*. Those that have healed our Diseases, that have saved us from imminent Dangers and Calamities, or present Death; those that have fed or cloathed us, or supported Life when we were poor and destitute: All these deserve particular kinds of Remembrance, and due Returns of Service. Those that have either vindicated our Honour, or increased our Reputation, and spread our good Name in the World, stand entitled also to some agreeable Returns of Benefit.

Don't let us imagine then, that *Gratitude* is a meer *Heroick Virtue*, that we may pay or not pay at our Pleasure;

Pleasure; for Nature dictates it to us, as a Piece of *strict commutative Justice*, and Equity of Dealing between Man and Man. We may be very properly said to treat our Neighbour *unjustly*, if we refuse to serve him again, who hath first served us, when his distress'd Circumstances shall require our Assistance.

There are some Cases indeed wherein the Person who is obliged by his Neighbour's Kindness, cannot possibly make a Return equal to the Benefit receiv'd, without ruining himself and his Family, or exposing himself much more than his Neighbour did to serve him. There are Cases wherein the Person who hath obliged us, may over-rate his Kindness, and undervalue all our Acknowledgments: He may require most unreasonable Returns, and think he is never sufficiently recompensed. There are Cases also wherein the Benefactor may repent of his past Services, may endeavour to take away the Benefit bestowed, may without Reason commence a resolute Enmity, and do what in him lies to cancel all former Obligations: In such Circumstances as these, the Obligation of Gratitude may be diminished, and perhaps may cease altogether. And though sometimes, in these very Cases, there may be high and heavy Charges of *Ingratitude* brought by the first Benefactor against a Person of a very grateful Mind; yet these Accusations may be utterly unjust in the Sight of God, who knows and weighs all Circumstances in a righteous Balance. But where no such Bars are laid in the Way, it is evident that the *Practice of Gratitude*, and a mutual Return of Benefits, is but a *Piece of natural Justice*. The very *Publicans and Sinners* do good to those that do good to them, Matt. v. 46. Luke viii. 32.

IV. Another Piece of *Justice* is, the *Payment of the full Due to those whom we bargain or deal with, whether the Contract be made formally in Words, or implied in the nature of Things, according to the Custom of Mankind.*

*kind.* And under this Head, not only those who *buy* and *sell*, who *lend* and *borrow*; but all Ranks and Degrees of Mankind, who have any Commerce with each other, are included, from the *Prince* upon the Throne, to the *Day-Labourer* in the Highways and the Hedges.

The very Notion of *commutative Justice* implies the *giving one good thing in barter or exchange for another.* And all Commerce amongst Men was originally carried on this Way, (*viz.*) The Husbandman gave Corn, the Graſtier Cattle; the Draper gave Cloth; the Artificers and Labourers their Skill and Work; the Prince and rich Man gave Food and Protection; the Poor and the Subject gave their Attendance and Service: And thus Mankind liv'd by an Exchange of Benefits. But when they found many Inconveniencies arise from this manner of Dealing, they contriv'd another way of Exchanges, and that is by *Money*; which by universal Agreement is made the common Measure of all Things in Contract: And since that Time, *Skill* and *Labour*, *Attendance* and *Services* are exchanged for *Money* as well as *Goods* and *Mercbandizes*. Now herein consists the Practice of *Justice*, that every one render to his Neighbour that which is due upon the Account of any of these Benefits or Conveniencies of Life he receives from him.

Let us give the first Place to *Kings* and *Rulers* in this Discourse, as Justice requires. Though the *Distribution* of special Rewards and Punishments may have something in it of a distinct Nature, yet the common Protection which they owe all their Subjects, and the Obedience and Tribute which their Subjects owe them upon that Account, are properly a part of *commutative Justice*. By their Oath of Magistracy, and by our Engagements of Allegiance expressed or implied, we bargain with them for *Protection*, and we ought to pay them *Tribute*. They accept of a high and heavy Charge, and agree to  
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execute the Laws of the Land for the Good of the People: Therefore not only the Purfes, but the Consciences of the People are under Obligations to pay Taxes to the Magistrates for the Support of his governing Power, and the Maintenance of his Honour and Authority, that he may the better fulfil the glorious and useful Work. This is what the Apostle insists upon, and argues in that known Place, the 13th Chapter to the Romans. *Rulers are ordained of God, not for a Terror to good Works, but to the Evil. The Ruler is the Minister of God to thee for Good, and he beareth not the Sword in vain; he is an Avenger to execute Wrath upon him that doth Evil. Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for Wrath, i. e. for fear of his Anger; but for Conscience-sake, as a Matter of Justice and Duty: And for this Cause also pay Tribute.* And it is to be noted, the Apostle puts our Duty in this respect upon the Foot of Justice, *Ver. 7. Render therefore to all their Dues, that is, whatsoever things are just, perform to them; Render Tribute to whom Tribute is due, Custom to whom Custom, Fear to whom Fear, Honour to whom Honour.*

As the Payment of Tribute and Taxes to those who undertake our Protection, Defence and Safety, is a necessary Duty; so the Payment of a Salary to a Teacher, of Wages to a Servant; of Money or Merchandize to a Trader, of Hire to the Workman, are other Parts of Justice. Let not the Labourer that hath reaped down your Fields, or wrought in your Service, go without his Hire, which was a Practice the Apostle reproached in his Days, *James v. 4. The Law of Moses is very strict in this Matter; Deut. xxiv. 14, 15. Thou shalt not oppress a hired Servant that is poor and needy, whether he be of thy Brethren, or a Stranger. To express it in modern Language; whether he be a Christian or not, a good Man or an evil Man, let him have his Hire. If he is so poor that he cannot tell how to provide for himself to answer the Necessities of the Evening, then see that*  
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thou pay him the Hire of the Day, *nor let the Sun go down upon it, for he is poor, and sets his Heart, or depends upon it.* Trespas not upon his Poverty by thy with-holding his Due so long as may turn to his Prejudice; let not his Hire, which is *detain'd by Fraud, cry against thee, for the Lord of Hosts, the God of Justice, will hear the Cry of the Oppressed.*

And not only in the Case of a *poor Labourer*, but in every other Instance make conscience of paying that which you have borrow'd, or what you owe to your Neighbour, and that not only in *full Measure*, but at the *appointed Time* of Payment: The *Time* is part of the Contract as well as the *Money*. Don't say, *I intend to be honest, but I won't pay this Week or this Month.* Do not with-hold what is due, and say to thy Neighbour, *Go, and come again, when thou hast it by thee: With-hold not Good from him to whom it is due, when it is in the Power of thine Hand to do it.* This is forbid by the inspired Preacher *Solomon*, Prov. iii. 27, 28. Nor is this agreeable to the golden Rule of our Saviour, *Do to others as ye would that others should do unto you.*

V. *Help to our Fellow-Creatures in Cases of great Necessity*, seems to be another *Piece of human Justice*, even though they have never done any thing actually for us. We are bound to defend our Neighbour from apparent Injury; so far as is consistent with our own Safety, and sometimes farther too. 'Tis our Duty to direct him in the right way, when he is wandering or uncertain. 'Tis a Piece of Justice to warn him of approaching Danger, and to give him some Assistance in case of sudden Calamity or Distress attending him. When we see his Soul, or his Body, or his Estate, in imminent Hazard, we ought to give him notice of it; we should put forth some Efforts of Kindness for his Security, and pluck him as a Brand out of the Fire. Our own Conscience dictates this to us, since we should think it a very reasonable thing

hing to expect the same Kindness from our Neighbour, when we are found in the like Circumstances.

Can we suppose that the Law of God should appoint us to *lift the Ox or the Ass of our Neighbour out of a Pit*, or to *restore his sheep to him when going astray*, Deut. xxii. 1. and yet that we are not bound to fulfil the same Duty of Love toward our Neighbour himself? Nay, the Command of *Moses* reaches still farther, *Exod. xxiii. 4. If thou meet thine Enemy's Ox or his Ass going astray, thou shalt surely bring it back to him again*. How much more should this be practised toward the Soul or the Body of a Fellow-Christian?

If the Law of Justice require us to secure the Cattle or Possessions of our Neighbour; surely then we are obliged to deal as kindly with *his Reputation and good Name*, which, in some Cases, is the best part of a Man's Estate, and is almost as dear to many as their Health or Life. When we happen therefore into such Company as give their Tongues a Loose to Scandal, and we hear our Neighbour vilified and reproached, we ought to ward off the Calumny, and to refute the Scandal, where we know that our Neighbour does not deserve it.

This Piece of Justice or Duty, to assist a suffering Neighbour, arises from the social Nature of Man, who by the Law of Nature is so far born for a social Life, as to come into the World with this Claim, and under this sort of Obligations; for a naked exposed Infant may claim the Patronage and Protection of every Eye that beholds him. And where other Circumstances are equal, those who are most capable of affording Help, seem to be most obliged. Now if it be a Work of human Justice to preserve such an helpless Piece of human Nature from Death, surely every Infant grown up to any Degrees of Capacity and Manhood, ought in like manner to esteem himself obliged to afford some Assistance to his Fel-

low-Creatures, according to their Distress, and his Capacity well consider'd and adjust'd.

Therefore, my assistance or Relief of an injur'd or perishing Creature, is a sort of Duty to Mankind, though the Person himself be an utter Stranger to me: The History of the *good Samaritan* in the Gospel tells me, that in such a Case every Man is my *Neighbour*, though he be of a different Nation, Sect, or Party. But when Men are Fellow-Subjects, or Fellow-Citizens, or combin'd in any natural, civil, or religious Society, this Rule of Justice appears with more Force and Evidence; it strikes a brighter Light upon the Conscience, and ought to have more Power upon the Heart and Practice; for Combination into Society is an implicit Contract or Promise of mutual Help under Necessity.

I confess, several of the Instances which I have mentioned under this fifth Head may be referr'd also to *Charity* and *Mercy*, of which I shall speak hereafter; but for as much as the Light of Nature and the Law of God require these beneficial Actions of Men towards each other, I have here placed them under the Head of *Justice*.

VI. The last piece of *Justice* which I shall mention, is *Reparation to those whom we have wilfully Injured, as far as possible*: And this is a certain Duty, whether we have done them Injury in their Souls, in their Bodies, in their Estates, or in their Reputation.

If we have led them into Errors or Heresy by our Conversation; if we tempted them to *Sin* by our *Allurement or Example*; if we have solicited their Assistance in any *base or guilty Practices* of our own, we ought seriously to employ our best Powers and Prayers toward their Recovery from the Snare of the Devil: If we have wilfully injured their Health; if we have blasted their Credit; if we have thrown a Blot upon their good Name; if we have defrauded them



them of any part of their Due, or wasted their Substance, let us know and consider that the Law of *Justice* requires us to make what *Restitution* we are capable of : But still it must be done in such a manner as must consist with our Duty to the rest of our Fellow-Creatures round about us.

'Tis a vain thing to pretend to be sorry and repent that we have done our Neighbour a wilful Injury, or to flatter him with idle Compliments of *asking his Pardon*, while it lies in his Power to repair the Damage he sustains in a way of Consistence with our other Duties, and yet we obstinately refuse it : Such a Repentance as this cannot be sincere in the sight of God, nor have we any reason to hope that his Justice or Mercy will condescend to accept it.

We have heard these various *Instances of Justice*, this large and particular Account what is *due to our Neighbour*, in the manifold Relations and Businesses of Life. I grant there are several Difficulties that may attend some of these Instances in the particular Practice of them, by reason of the infinite Variety of Circumstances which may surround our Actions, and the unforeseen Occurrences of human Life. The *strictest Rules of Equity or Justice*, in some Cases, require a Mitigation ; and 'tis impossible to say beforehand what shall be precisely and exactly due to our Neighbour in every new Accident or Occurrence. But a *sincere Love of Justice* wrought deep into the Heart, and a *sacred Regard to the golden Rule of Equity*, which *Christ* has given us, will lead us through most of these Perplexities into the Paths of Righteousness and Truth.

It is time now to have the *Question put close to Conscience* ; “ Has this been the manner of our Life ?  
“ Has this been our Conduct toward our Fellow-  
“ Creatures ? Are we *Children*, and have we paid  
“ all due Honour and Obedience to our *Parents* ?  
“ Has the *Father* no cause to complain that we have  
“ disobeyed his Authority ? Has the *Mother* no rea-

“ son to say, that we have scorned her Advice, or  
“ abused her Tenderneſs and Compaſſion? Are we  
“ *Servants*, have we never waſted the Goods of our  
“ *Maſter*, nor ſpent that Time in idle Company, in  
“ Folly, or in Sin, which ſhould have been employ-  
“ in his Service? Have we dealt with our *Relatives*  
“ in the ſame Family as becomes a *Brother*, a *Siſter*,  
“ or a near *Kinſman*, and fulfilled the Duties to  
“ which we were born? Do we never neglect to  
“ make *due Acknowledgments* for Favours received?  
“ Have we loved thoſe that love us, and practi-  
“ fed the Law of *Juſtice* and *Gratitude* to thoſe who  
“ have reſcu’d our Souls and Bodies from Diſtreſs  
“ and Danger, or laid Obligations upon us by pec-  
“ culiar Benefits? Am I a *Trader*, and do I pra-  
“ ctife ſtrict Juſtice and Truth in all that I buy,  
“ and in all that I ſell? Have I been carefully ſol-  
“ licitous to wrong no Man, to defraud no Man, to  
“ cheat and cozen no Man? Do I hate the Arts of  
“ *Falſhood* and *Knavery*? Have I paid the full Due  
“ to all that I deal with, and do I keep the proper  
“ Time of Payment, which Contract or Custom  
“ have appointed? Have I defended my Neighbour  
“ from Injury, and aſſiſted him in the Day of his  
“ Diſtreſs, as I my ſelf ſhould reaſonably hope for  
“ his Defence and Aſſiſtance? Have I ſought to  
“ reſcue his good Name from Reproach and Slan-  
“ der when it has been attacked? Or have I rather  
“ fallen in with Slanderers, and joined in the wilful  
“ Scandal? Have I honeſtly ſought to make *Reſtitu-*  
“ *tion* to another where I have been guilty of wilful  
“ Injury, and done what in me lies to repair the  
“ Damage that my Injuſtice has brought upon him?  
“ Have I attempted to repair his Loſſes, ſo far as  
“ is conſiſtent with the Duties of my other Relations  
“ in Life?” Where is the Perſon that can lay his  
Hand upon his Heart, and ſay, I am guiltleſs before  
God in all this? Who can waſh *his Hands in Innocen-*  
*cy*, and pronounce himſelf Righteous? Surely ſuch a  
Diſ-

Discourse as this is, should awaken Conscience to sensible Acts of Repentance and Mourning; we should be willing and ready to yield to the Conviction, where the Word of God fastens the Charge upon us, and lay our selves low before the Throne of a righteous God. “Blessed Lord God, *if thou art strict to mark Iniquities, who can stand before thee? But there is Forgiveness with thee, that thou may'st be feared.* We have fail'd in many Instances of Duty toward our Fellow Creatures, as well as toward thee our Creator: We have neither given to God nor to our Neighbour the full Due of Love which thy righteous Law requires: We lie in the Dust before thee, and betake our selves to the Refuge that is set before us: *Jesus* the Righteous is our Hope, he not only paid to God and Man all their Due, in the Course of his holy Life, but he also restor'd that Honour to thy Justice by his Death, which we had taken away by our Unrighteousnesses. O may every Soul of us be forgiven for his sake, and created a-new in *Christ Jesus* unto Good Works! *Amen.*”





# SERMON XXV.

Christian Morality, viz. Justice, &c.

PHILIP. iv. 8.

— *Whatsoever Things are just — think on these Things.*

**I**F a bare Proposal of the *Rule of Duty*, and the mention of the *various Instances* of it, were sufficient to persuade Mankind to the *Practice*; then I need not prolong my Discourse on this Subject of *Honesty and Justice*: For I have already propos'd the *sacred Rule* which our Saviour has given us, *Do to others as ye would that others should do to you*; and I have describ'd the *several Instances* wherein this Rule must direct our Conduct, that we may be just and righteous in all our Dealings amongst Men.

But alas! our Natures are so corrupt, our Consciences are so unwilling to receive the Laws of Duty, and our perverse Wills and Passions have so much Reluctance to the Practice, that we have need of *Arguments* to inforce it upon Conscience, we have need of powerful *Motives* to awaken our Souls to Righteousness; and 'tis necessary therefore that I proceed to the *third Head of Discourse* which I propos'd, and that is to shew *how far the Light of Nature dictates to us the Duty of common Justice*, and what Arguments may be drawn from thence to influence Men to be *honest*.

I. If



I. If we consider the *natural Right* that every Man hath to keep that which belongs to him, it will appear that this is the Gift of God as the *God of Nature*. God, the common Author of all our Beings, requires that this Right be held sacred and inviolable.

I shall not run back to ancient Ages, to trace the *original Grounds of Property*, or how Men became intitled to any of their Possessions: 'Tis sufficient for me, that every Man is born into this World with a Right to his Life, to his Limbs, to his Liberty and Safety, and to the good things of this World which he possesses according to the *Laws of Nature*, and of the Nation where he is born. He has a Right also that these should be secure from the Hands of Injustice and Violence, unless he himself be some way concerned in the Practice of Injury to his Fellow-Creatures. That Man therefore who offers Injustice or Violence to his Neighbour in his Body, or his Soul, or Estate, he robs him of his natural Right which God hath given him, and which the Law of Nature secures to him: He sins against the *God of Nature*, the common Father of Mankind; and his Conscience hath reason to expect that the *God of Nature*, who is just and righteous, will avenge the Mischief done to his injured Creatures.

Let it be always observed and excepted here, that the great God himself (consider'd meerly as the God of Nature, and where he has not bound himself by Promise) reserves a Right to resume what he has given, and especially when his Creatures have made a Forfeiture of their Blessings by sinning against their Maker: But this does not authorize Men to deprive one another of their Possessions, unless he has appointed them from Heaven the Executioners of his Vengeance by a most evident and infallible Commission particularly given by God himself; as in the Case of the *Israelites* spoiling the *Egyptians* of their borrowed Jewels, and depriving the *Canaanites* of their Lands

and their Lives: But I know not any Instance of that kind ever since.

II. If we consider *the need that every Man stands in of the help of his Fellow Creatures*, Justice and Honesty will appear to be a *natural Duty of the Social Life*: And God, as he is *the Governor of the World*, will take Vengeance of any Neglect or Violation of this Duty, either in this World, or in the other.

*Commutative Justice*, as it is described in the former Discourse, is built upon this Foundation, that one Man has need of another's Assistance: Nor is there any the meanest Figure amongst Mankind so very worthless, useless, and contemptible, but he may be capable of doing us some Service either now or hereafter. 'Tis possible we may be in such Circumstances, as to stand in need of the Help of the *Meanest*, as well as of the *Mighty*; and therefore the *Duty of social Life* obliges us to practise the *Rules of Justice* toward all. The *Rich* stand in need of the *Poor* to perform the meaner Offices for their Convenience; as much as the *Poor* stand in need of the *Rich* to supply them with Food or Money. The *Master* has need of the *Servant* to assist and obey him, as well as the *Servant* stands in need of Maintenance or Wages from the Hands of his *Master*. One Man can never procure for himself all the Necessaries, and all the Conveniences of Life; it is indeed impossible. The same Man cannot sow his own Corn, reap his own Harvest, keep his own Sheep, make his own Bread, form all his own Garments, Build his own House, fashion his own Furniture, and secure his own Possessions; no Man can provide for himself in all Respects, without the Assistance of his Fellow-Creatures. Now those from whom he expects to receive Help in any of these Instances, it is necessary he should give them Help in other Instances, wherein they stand in need of his. This is one Foundation of Justice between Man and Man; that

so every Man may have the Necessaries and Conveniencies of Life by his Neighbour's Assistance. Thus *the King himself* (as Solomon says) *is served by the Field*; Ecclef. v. 9. The Prince stands in need of the Plowman: The Plowman gives Food to the Prince, and the Prince gives to the Plowman Protection and Safety.

I might run through the various Instances wherein *Justice* is to be practised, and shew how the higher and lower Orders and Characters of Men have mutual Need of each other: The *Buyer* and the *Seller*, the *Artificer* and the *Merchant*, the *Teacher* and the *Scholar*; and thus I might make it appear, that unless a *due Exchange of Benefits* be maintain'd, and the *Practice of Justice* secur'd, none of us could enjoy the Safety, the Ease, or the Conveniencies of Life.

Where there is no Practice of *Justice* amongst Men, no Man can live safe by his Neighbour: Every one that is mighty and malicious, that is proud or covetous, that is envious or knavish, would rob another of his Due, and either assume the Possessions of his Neighbour to himself, or make havock of them, and destroy them. There would be everlasting Confusion amongst Men, Slander and Theft, Cheating and Knavery; Plunder and Slaughter, and bloody Violence would reign among all the Tribes of Mankind, if Justice were banish'd from the Earth: for neither Life, nor Liberty, nor Peace, nor any of our Possessions, nor our good Name, can be secur'd without it. Therefore the Light and Law of Nature sets a sacred Guard upon Justice, and has written the Necessity of it in the Consciences of all Men, who have not *seared those Consciences as with a red-hot Iron*, and rased out so much of humane Nature from their Souls.

The *Practice of Justice* has so extensive an Influence into the whole Conduct of our Lives, and the Welfare of Mankind, that some of the *Heathen Writers* have made it to be *comprehensive of all Virtues*.

But

But because sinful Men are ready to break the Bonds of *Commutative Justice*, and invade the Property, the Peace, or the Life of their Neighbours, therefore *Government* is appointed, and *Magistrates* are ordain'd to maintain Peace and Equity amongst Men, and to punish the Breakers of it. This is the greatest Reason why there must be such a thing as *Magistracy* and *Distributive Justice* amongst Mankind; that those who commit Outrage upon their Neighbours, and practise Injustice toward them, may be punished by the Laws: For, as the Apostle says to *Timothy*, *the Law is not made for the Righteous, but for the Disobedient, for the Ungodly, and for Sinners; for Murderers, Stealers, and Lyars, &c.* That it may be a strong Restraint upon the violent Inclinations of Men, and bring just Vengeance upon them, when they bring Injury upon their Neighbours. Therefore 'tis for the Welfare of the Innocent and the Righteous, that the Laws have ordain'd Vengeance for the Guilty; that those who would not injure their Fellow-Creatures, may be guarded in the Enjoyment of their own Property and their Peace, and may have them secur'd from the Sons of Injustice.

And besides all the Punishment that such Sinners justly receive from Men on Earth, God, the great *Governor of the World*, has often revealed his *Wrath* from Heaven against all the *Unrighteousness* of Men, as well as their *Ungodliness*. He has hereby proclaim'd his publick Approbation of Justice, and his Hatred of all Iniquity. His Terrors have sometimes appeared in signal and severe Instances against those who have been notoriously unrighteous, and who have broken all the Rules of Equity in the Treatment of their Fellow-Creatures. This the *Heathens* themselves have taken notice of. And they thought this to be so necessary for the Government of the World, that their Priests have invented a sort of Goddess call'd *Nemesis*, whose Office is to avenge the Pra-  
ctice



Justice of Fraud or Violence, and to bring down Curses on the Head of this kind of Criminals.

As the ancient Records of the *Heathen* World give us some Histories of divine Vengeance, so the *Bible* abounds with more awful and illustrious Instances of this kind ; which leads me to

The *Fourth Head* of my Discourse ; and that is to consider, *What forcible Arguments and Motives the Christian Religion affords for the Practice of Justice among Men.*

If I were to speak of *Distributive Justice*, or that which belongs to the Practice of the Magistrate, never was it more gloriously manifest, than in and by God the Father, when he refused to pass by our Iniquities without Punishment, and laid the dreadful Weight of it upon the Head and Soul of his own Son. Never could *Magistracy* receive such a Glory, as when our Lord *Jesus Christ*, the Son of God, hung and died upon the Cross, suffering the Penalty that the Law of God, the supreme Magistrate, had denounced against Sinners.

And as *Punishing Justice* was glorified in all its Terrors, so *Rewarding Justice* also appeared most illustrious. Because our Lord *Jesus Christ* had fulfilled Obedience not only to the broken Law which we lay under, but to those peculiar Laws which God the Father also gave him as a Mediator ; therefore it pleased God *highly to advance him*, according to his own eternal Covenant. God rewarded him, as a Magistrate, distributing Justice to a Person who had done the greatest Things for the Honour of his Sovereign : He *exalted him at his own right Hand*, and gave him a Name above every Name, that at the Name of *Jesus* every Knee should bow ; for he deserved it at the Hands of his Father, and his Father distributed Rewards equal to his Desert.

*Rewarding Justice* again appears glorious, in that God the Father communicates unto us the Rewards  
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of the Sufferings of his own Son. *God is faithful and just to forgive us our Sins*, because the Blood of *Jesus Christ*, his Son, has paid for all our Follies and Unrighteousness; 1 *John* i. 9. *Faithful and Just to his Son*, that he may not go without the Rewards of his Sufferings: *Faithful and Just to us*, because it was in our Name and Stead that the Son suffered.

But not to insist upon this longer, *Commutative Justice* is abundantly enforc'd also by many Considerations drawn from the Books of the *Old Testament*, as well as from the *Gospel of Christ*.

If we consult the *Moral Statutes of God*, which were given to the *Jews*, we shall find them full of Righteousness. These Statutes are of everlasting Force, and their divine Solemnity should impress our Consciences. *That which is altogether just shalt thou follow, that thou may'st live and inherit the Land: And the Judges and Officers shall judge the People with righteous Judgment, and shall shew no Respect to Persons, nor take a Gift to pervert Justice; Deut. xvi. 18, 19, 20. Ye shall not steal, nor deal falsely, nor lye to one another, Thou shalt not defraud thy Neighbour, nor rob him. The Wages of him that is hired shall not abide with thee all Night until the Morning. Ye shall do no Unrighteousness in Judgment, in Weight, or in Measure. Just Balances and just Weights shall ye have; I am the Lord your God, Lev. xix. A false Balance is an Abomination to the Lord, but a just Weight is his Delight, Prov. xi. 1. To do Justice and Judgment is more acceptable to the Lord than Sacrifice, Prov. iii. 15. Woe to him that buildeth his House by Unrighteousness, and his Chamber by Wrong, who uses his Neighbour's Service without Wages, and giveth him not for his Work, Jer. xxii. 13. Remove not the antient Land-Marks, nor enter into the Field of the Fatherless; for their Redeemer is mighty, and he shall plead their Cause with thee, Prov. xxiii. 10, 11.*

If we review the *Records of the Jewish History*, we shall find the Cruel and the Covetous, the Tyrant  
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and the Oppressor; made terrible Examples of the Vengeance of God against Unrighteousness. Survey the *Plagues of Egypt*, and the dreadful Desolations of that fruitful Country, with the Destruction of the First-born by the Midnight Pestilence, and the Armies of *Pharaoh* drowned in the *Red-Sea*, and you may read there the Wrath of God against the Unrighteousness of Men, written in dreadful Characters. They treated the Race of *Israel* with Cruelty and sore Oppression; they destroyed their Male Children, and provoked God to bring swift Destruction upon themselves. Behold *Adonibezek*, King of the *Canaanites*, with his Thumbs and his great Toes cut off by *Joshua*, and confessing the Justice of the great God; *Threescore and ten Kings*, said he, *with their great Toes and their Thumbs cut off, have gathered their Meat under my Table: As I have done, so God hath requited me*, Judges i. 7. See the *Dogs licking up the Blood of Ahab* in the place where he slew *Naboth the Jezreelite*, in order to take unjust Possession of his Vineyard, 1 *Kings* xxi. 19. These things which were written of old Time, remain upon Record for our Instruction in the Days of Christianity.

But let us take more special notice what Influences may be derived from the Gospel, and from the Name of Christ, to enforce the practice of Justice among Men.

I. If we look to our Lord Jesus as a Lawgiver, how various and how plain are his solemn and repeated Commands, not only in his Sermon upon the Mount, but upon other Occasions too, that Justice be practised between Man and Man. He hath explained to us that glorious Rule of Equity, on purpose to make the Practice of Justice easy, plain, and universal, *Love your Neighbour as yourself*; that is, *Do to others, as ye would that others should do to you*.

We cannot but think that the holy Soul of our Lord Jesus was concerned to secure the Practice of Justice

Justice and Righteousness among his Followers, when we read his terrible Rebuke to the *Pharisees* for the neglect of it, and a Curse pronounced upon them; *Matt. xxiii. 23. Wo to you Scribes and Pharisees, Hypocrites, for ye pay Tythe of Mint, and Annise, and Cummin, and have omitted the weightier Matters of the Law, Judgment, Mercy and Faith.* Judgment in that place may signify *Commutative and Distributive Justice*; all manner of exercise of Righteousness towards their Fellow-Creatures. Under a pretence of serving God better than your Neighbours, and crowding his Temple with your Presents, and his Altar with Sacrifices and Gifts, ye abandon common Justice, ye neglect the Righteousness due to your Fellow-Creatures. There is a *Woe* denounced upon you, and my Father will inflict the Curse, for he hates *Robbery for Burnt-Offering*, *Isa. lxi. 8.* Nor will the God of Heaven excuse you from paying your Dues to Men on Earth, under pretence of paying Honours or Sacrifices to him.

There are many other Threatnings in the *New Testament* written against those that neglect Justice, and pronounced by the Apostles in the Name and Authority of *Christ*, their exalted Lord. The *Covetous and Extortioners*, those that take away the Right of their Fellow-Creatures, are shut out from the heavenly Blessedness; *1 Cor. vi. 10. Know ye not, says the Apostle, that none of these shall inherit the Kingdom of God?* As much as to say, It is so very obvious a thing, that an unjust Man can never enter into Heaven, (whatsoever Pretence he makes) that I may appeal to the meanest Capacity, *ye all know it. God will repay Vengeance to them that do wrong to their Neighbours, whether they be great or mean, for there is no respect of Persons with him, Col. iii. 25.*

II. Consider *Christ* as a Pattern of Justice and Righteousness. Look to the Example of our Lord *Jesus*; you see him who was the sovereign Magistrate and  
Lord



Lord of all, who could distribute Crowns and Kingdoms to Men, submitting himself to *Commutative Justice* among Creatures.

Behold the Son of God, who was the *brightness of his Father's Glory*, and the delight of his Soul before the Creation, behold him stooping down to our World, and taking Flesh and Blood upon him to become our *Brother*, that he might shew us how we ought to *love our Brethren*. It was an unparalled Instance of divine Love that *Christ* has given us, when he came down from Heaven to become our *Neighbour*, and to dwell amongst us, that he might teach us to *love our Neighbours as our selves*.

Behold the glorious Son of God subjecting himself to his earthly Parents, to *Joseph* the Carpenter, and to *Mary* his Mother, that he might instruct us how to pay Obedience to our superior Relations. See how the King of kings pays Tribute to *Cæsar*, when he was so poor, that he was forced to send *Peter* a fishing, to procure the Tribute-Money by a Miracle. And though the Beasts of the Field were his, and he could have commanded *the Cattle upon a thousand Hills*, to make provision for his Followers; yet he would not dispossess the Owners of them, but created Food on purpose to feed four and five Thousand in the Wilderness.

III. *If we consider Christ as a glorious Benefactor, who has taken care to provide for us the Necessaries of this Life, and hath purchased for us, at the hands of God, the eternal Treasures of Heaven and Glory; has not this blessed Consideration force enough to guard us against Temptations to Injustice? Shall a Christian break the Rules of Equity, and steal, or cheat, or plunder his Neighbour to gain Money or Merchandize, who has the Promises of God for his Support in a Way of Diligence and humble Faith? Shall we sully our Consciences, and defile our Souls with Knavery and Injustice for a little of the Pelf of this World,*

World, when we have the *unsearchable Riches of Christ* made over to us in the Gospel, and the Inheritance of Heaven in Reversion?

IV. Let us consider the very Nature and Design of the Gospel of Christ, 'tis to make Sinners holy, to make the Unjust righteous: The new Man of Christianity must be created in Righteousness and true Holiness. Therefore are we purchased with the Blood of Christ, that we might be a peculiar People, zealous of good Works, Tit. ii. 14.

It is a Shame and Scandal to the Christian Name; when one who wears it is unrighteous or dishonest, An unjust Christian, what a Contradiction is it in it self, and how it disgraces the Profession of the Gospel! Hear how the great Apostle treats his Corinthian Disciples when such sort of Sins were found amongst them; 1 Cor. vi. 7, 8. Dare any of you, having a Matter against another, go to Law before the Unjust and the Infidel? Dare any of you injure your Neighbour, your Fellow-Christian? I speak this to your Shame. Brother goes to Law with Brother, and ye injure one another. Why don't you rather suffer Wrong? nay, you do wrong and defraud, and that your own Brethren. But what is the Consequence? Such Wretches as these are, shall never inherit the Kingdom of God.

The Grace of God that brings Salvation, Titus ii. 9; 10. teaches us to deny all Ungodliness and worldly Lusts, and to live soberly, and righteously, and religiously in this present evil World. It teaches us Righteousness towards Men, as well as Sobriety among our selves, and Godliness towards the King of Heaven. But how hath this divine Religion been scandalized for want of Justice in the Professors of it! Scandalized among Heathen Kingdoms, among Turks and Unbelievers! And Christianity in our own Land, how hath it been dishonoured by the Practices of those that pretend to that holy Name! How hath the Conversion of wild Heathens in  
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the *Indian Nations* been hindered by the Injustice and Fraud of *Christian Merchants* and Traders there, or by Merchants who call themselves *Christians*. I have heard it said by Persons whom I could fully credit, that a *Turk* when he is suspected of Fraud and Cheating, will reply, *What, do you think I am a Christian?* O! how hath the Gospel of the lovely *Jesus* been rendred odious by the abominable Practices of those that pretend to honour him! What Falshood, what Lying, what Perjury, and Cheating, and Deceit, and Violence have been practised by our Traders in foreign Lands! Thus there has been an ill Savour of our holy Christianity carried beyond the Seas, by those, perhaps, who have pretended to convert the *Infidels*. And many in our own Nation, who have begun to set their Faces towards Heaven, have been sorely disgusted at the knavish Practices of Professors, and been tempted to think that all Religion is a Jest, and to abandon the Ordinances of the Gospel. But when Souls stumble, and fall, and perish by such Discouragements, Woe to him that gave the Offence, and laid this Stumbling-block of Iniquity in their Way. How heavy must the Blood of Souls lie upon such Sinners!

Surely there has been enough said on this Head to discourage *Oppression*, *Deceit*, and *Injustice* in the Professors of Christianity, if Argument, and Shame and Terror can have Power and Prevalence over Sin and Temptation. O may Almighty Grace attend this Discourse of *Justice*, and work the sacred Love of it in the Hearts of Men!

Now if ye are made willing to walk by the Rules of Equity and Justice, instead of proposing *particular Directions* for this End, I shall proceed

In the fifth and last Place, to point out the various Springs of *Injustice*, that ye may avoid them.

The great and general Spring of Injustice to our Neighbour is a *criminal and excessive Love to our selves*. For since the comprehensive Notion of *Justice* lies in this, *To give to every one that which is due*, it follows, that the general Notion of *Injustice* consists in *taking to our selves more than is due*, or in *giving less than is due to our Neighbour*.

There are a thousand Instances of this *Unrighteousness* among Men, in reference to their Bodies, their Souls, their good Name, or their Possessions in the World. This general Term of *Injustice* is so extensive, that it includes a great Part of the Sins forbidden in the second Table. *Disobedience to Parents and Governors, Rebellion, Treason, Murder, Adultery, Theft, Violence and Plunder, Cheating, and Deceit, and Slander, with all sinful Desires to possess what belongs to our Neighbour*, may be justly ranked under the Head of *Unrighteousness*: And they spring from this one Fountain, namely, *An excessive Regard to Self*. It is to this natural and exalted *Idol* that we sacrifice the Peace and the Property, the good Name, and even the Life of our Fellow-Creatures. Nor will any Method be effectual to secure us from the Practice of *Injustice*, till we learn to degrade *Self* a little in our own Esteem, and to judge of our *Neighbour*, and of the Things *that are his Due*, by the same Rule and Measure by which we take an Estimate of *our selves*, and of *what is due to us*. Let us put our *Neighbour* in the Place of *Self*, and judge how he ought to be treated.

But that we may more effectually guard our selves from the Temptations of *Injustice*, let us descend to Particulars, and we shall find that almost all the unrighteous Practices of Men spring from some of these six Principles; (viz.) *Covetousness, Pride, Luxury, Sloth, Malice against Men, or Distrust of God*.



I. *Covetousness is a great Spring of Injustice.* This consists in an *immoderate Desire of possessing*: And we are told by the Apostle, that the *Love of Money is the Root of all Evil, which, while some have coveted after, they have not only erred from the Faith, but they have ventured upon many Sins, as well as pierc'd themselves through with many Sorrows.* For they that will be rich, fall into *Temptation and a Snare, and into many foolish and hurtful Lusts, which drown Men in Destruction and Perdition*; 1 Tim. vi. 9, 10. Solomon is of the same Mind, Prov. xxviii. 20, 22. *He that maketh hast to be rich, shall not be innocent, for he hath an evil Eye upon the Possessions of his Neighbour.*

It is from this cursed Root of Covetousness that a Multitude of bitter Fruits proceed. It is by this vicious Principle working within us, that we are tempted to take what is not our Due, either *by Craft or by Violence.* Hence it is that Men cheat each other in their daily Commerce, they *defraud and overreach* their Neighbour, if they can, in every Bargain they make, and try all the Arts of subtle Knavery, in order to enrich themselves. They divest their Souls of Truth and Virtue, and put off Conscience and Shame to *load themselves with thick Clay.*

It is Covetousness that teaches the Sons of Men to practise upon their Dealers with a false Balance and a deceitful Beam. They shorten their Measures, and lessen their Weights by which they sell their Goods: But when the Case alters, and they buy any thing for themselves, they will, if possible, take another sort of Weight, or use a different Measure, all *which are an Abomination to the Lord.*

It is the same evil and unrighteous Principle that persuades the Seller to put off *corrupt and damaged Wares* for good and sound, and to cozen his Neighbour with Merchandize that is by no means such as he reasonably expects. It is this Principle that persuades the Buyer also to cheat his Neighbour with

corrupt and false *Money*, which he knows to be unlawful Coin. For corrupt Merchandize and corrupt Money, false Balances, light Weights, and scanty Measure, seem all to stand in the same Rank of Deceit: These are all Weapons of Craft and Knavery to give a secret Wound to their Neighbour's Estate, they all belong to the Armory of Fraud, and the Magazine of Unrighteousness.

It is this covetous Humour that tempts the Tongues of Men to *speak flattering Falshoods* in their daily Dealings, and some of them make an hourly Sacrifice of Truth to the Gain of a Penny. It is from this Principle that they *break their Promises of Payment*; they with-hold the Money that is due to their Neighbour, beyond all reasonable Time, and that for no other Reason but to gain by the Loan of it: They *delay the Payment* of their poor Creditors for many Months, or perhaps for Years, and put the Advantage which they make of this Delay into their own Purse. This is a frequent, but an unrighteous Practice in our Day: For the Profit that accrues by the detaining of Money that is due to another beyond the customary or contracted Time of Payment, should doubtless be given to the Person to whom the principal Money was due; or at least he should have such a valuable Share of it as may compensate the Damage or Loss he sustains by the Delay.

It is a covetous Desire of Gain that tempts Men to *practise Extortion*, and to *prey upon the Necessities* of those they deal with. When the Buyer wants any Conveniency of Life, they force him to give much more than it is worth, because he stands in the utmost Need of it: Or they constrain the Seller perhaps to part with some of his most valuable Possessions for a Trifle, because he is under special Necessity and present Distress. This was the Extortion which *Jacob* practised upon his Brother *Esau*, when he made him *sell his Birth-right for a Mess of Pottage*, while

while he was *faint with bunting*. And it is the same Iniquity when we *impose upon the Ignorance* or known Unskillfulness of the Person we deal with; and especially when we make our Advantage of Children or Servants, or of Persons who confess their own Ignorance, and leave the Choice of the Goods, or the Determination of the Price, to the Conscience of him that sells.

We may indeed set a just Value upon our own Goods; but we must not set a Price upon any Man's pressing Necessity, nor raise a Tax upon his Ignorance. It can never be certainly determined how much it is lawful for a Trader to get by his Merchandize: Doubtless he may sometimes make a greater Gain of the same Things than at another: And this is often necessary, in order to compensate the Losses, the Risks, or Dangers, that he passes through. He may lawfully make those Advantages which the Change of Things, and the divine Providence often puts into his Hands: Nor is it unlawful for him to take more of some Persons than he does of others for the same Merchandize; for he may treat some of his Customers favourably, though he must deal righteously and justly with them all. But let him see to it that he use Ingenuity towards the Poor, the Necessitous, and the Unskillful, as well as Moderation toward all Men. The Circumstances of Things are so various, that much of the Practice of Justice must be left to the Court of Equity in every Man's own Breast, under the sacred Influence of this Rule, *Do that to others which you think reasonable that others should do to you*. It is best in all doubtful and difficult Cases to practise what is fair and honourable in the Sight of Men, and what is safe and innocent in the Sight of God; for *a good Conscience is better than the largest Gain*: But where the sacred Principles of Virtue are over-born by corrupt Inclinations, the moral Powers of the Soul are stretch-

ed at first to the Lengths of moderate Iniquity, and Conscience is strained to the Indulgence of some smaller Unrighteousness; but Virtue will die by Degrees, and Conscience will learn in time to allow bolder Injustice. And then, though it may be stupified and senseless for a Season, yet let the Sinner know, that it will have its Feeling return again, and the Guilt of Knavery and Falshood will torture the Soul with unknown Agonies here or hereafter.

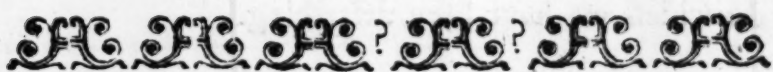
But the wretched Influence of this *Vice of Covetousness* is not confined only to *Traffick* and *Merchandize*: It spreads its Unrighteousness much farther and wider: It tempts the Sons and Daughters of Men to with-hold due Honour and necessary Supplies from their aged Parents, and exposes to great Hardships in the latter End of Life, those to whom we owe our Ise itself, and the Comforts of it in our younger Years. It with-holds Wages from the Servant, and Salary from him that has earned it. It forbids those who have received Benefits to make a grateful Return to their Benefactors. It will teach a Man to stop his Ears at the Cry of his Neighbour in Distress, lest it should cost some Money for his Relief. It refuses an Alms to the starving Poor, and finds an Excuse for the Churl, lest he stretch out his Hand of Bounty to a perishing Family. It is so wrapt up in *Self*, that it never considers what is *due to another*; and ventures to break all the Rules of Righteousness rather than diminish its own Estate, or part with any thing it can call *MINE*. It wou'd suffer a Church or a Kingdom to sink and perish, and let the publick Peace be broken, and the Nation dissolved, if it might but secure it self and its own Possessions in the midst of those Ruins. An accursed Vice! An Iniquity big with Misery and Desolation! yet it hides it self too often from Conviction and Reproof; it runs like a River under Ground, and attempts to conceal it self under the specious Disguises  
of



of *Frugality* and *Virtue*, while it practises all the Mischiefs we have been describing.

II. *Pride* is another Spring of Injustice. But having broken up the *Fountain* of *Covetousness* as of a great *Deep*, and traced it in its various Streams, the Labour of drying them up has employed so much Time, that the Pursuit of the other Springs of *Unrighteousness* must be delayed till a further Season.





# SERMON XXVI.

Christian Morality, viz. Justice,  
Purity, &c.

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PHILIP. iv. 8.

— *Whatsoever Things are just, whatsoever  
Things are pure — think on these Things,*

Ὅσα δίκαια, ὅσα ἀγαθὰ,

**J**ustice and Truth are two of the chief Bands that preserve human Society. If Truth and Justice perish from the Earth, the Sons of Men would become like the Savages of the Wilderness, where the strong or the crafty Animals prey upon the Weak, the Simple, and the Innocent. The Lord God, the Author of Nature, is a God of Justice, and he has written something of this Law in the Consciences of Men. But the God of Grace has given us much plainer Rules for the Practice of it, hath allured us to Righteousness by sweeter Motives, and hath guarded it with more awful and solemn Terrors. These things have been the Subject of the former Discourse; and that we may, as far as possible, assist towards the rooting out of Injustice from the Hearts and Lives of Christians, I have begun to point out some of the chief Principles, or Springs of it.

The

The *first* which I mention'd is *Covetousness*, a vicious Weed that grows in corrupt Nature, and is fruitful of a thousand unrighteous Actions.

I proceed now to the *second*, that is *Pride*. When a Person sets too high a Value upon himself, and aggrandizes himself in his own Esteem, he is ready to imagine that all things are due to him, and there's very little left to become due to his Neighbour. The *proud*, as well as the *covetous* Man, is full of *Self*, and he forgets the Command of *Love to his Neighbour*: He treats him as if he was not made of the same Clay, and lives as though he were obliged to no Duty to his Fellow-Creatures. This is evident in a Variety of Instances.

It is *Pride* that *forbids us to give due Respect to those that are above us in the Family, in the Church, or in the Civil State*: And instead of paying the Honours that are due to Superiors, we are tempted to treat them with Insolence and Scorn. Many a *Father*, in our degenerate Age, has found this unhappy Effect of raising his Children too soon and too high: And the *Mother* has seen her Sin, and felt it in her Punishment, when she has cockered up her young Off-spring in *Pride*, and thereby taught them to break the *Rules of Justice*, to slight all her Authority, and make a Scoff of that Pre-eminence which God and Nature have given her.

The proud Man is ready to say in his Heart, "All that are around me ought to pay me Respect, and do me Justice," while he is regardless of the Respect due to others. "Let them carry it towards me as they ought, and I'll carry it toward them as I please."

It is *Pride* that inclines us to *throw a Blot here and there upon the good Name of our Neighbour*, and to *blemish his Reputation*, lest he should out-shine us. When some honourable mention is made of another Person in our Company, especially if it be one of our own Sex, our own Rank or Degree in the World, do we  
not

not feel something rising within us to lessen their Honour, and to stain their Character? It is through this Vanity and Ambition of Mind, that we are tempted to defame and reproach our Neighbour, and to rob him of his just Honour among Men, and we endeavour to build our own Fame and Credit upon the Ruin of his. But it is a sandy, or rather an impious Foundation; and the Fame that is built upon such Ground will never stand. *Pride* inclines us to assume more *Respect* than is due to our selves, and to take it away from our Neighbour, even as *Covetousness* tempts us to take more *Money* to our selves than is due, and to deprive our Neighbour of it. Thus both of them are opposite to the sacred Rule of Justice; one to that Justice which we owe to our Neighbour's Estate, and the other to his good Name.

But the evil Influence of *Pride* spreads farther also; for it teaches us to practise *Unrighteousness in Matters of Property*: It instructs us in the Methods of *Oppression*, and inspires us with a wicked Courage to practise it; *Psal.* lxxiii. 6, 7, 8. When *Pride* compasses Men about as a Chain, and they wear it as a golden Ornament, then *Violence* covers them as a Garment; and though their Eyes stand out with Fatness, and they have more than Heart could wish, yet they are corrupt, and speak wickedly concerning Oppression. They gripe those that are poor, because they themselves are mighty. They refuse to pay the just Demands of their Neighbours, they speak loftily, and stand it out with them against all Right and Justice, because they are great in the World. It is the Rule of Justice to change Places with our humble Neighbour, and ask our selves, What we should think due to us, if we were in his Place? Or at least we should set our selves and our Neighbour upon the Level, and consider what is just and right on both Sides. But the Heart of *Pride* cannot bear such a Rule, it exalts itself far above the Level of Mankind, and practises toward those that are around it with a superior Insolence



solence and Injustice. Cursed *Pride*, the First-born of Hell! It seized our first Parents, and tempted them to aim at Godhead, to practise Injury to God himself, and assume a Right to the Fruit of the forbidden Tree! Vile Iniquity, that hath tainted all the Seed of *Adam*! It is a haughty Poison that was infused into our Veins with the first Sin; and where shall we find the Son or Daughter of *Eve* that is not infected with it? Blessed be the Grace of God, wheresoever its Dominion is broken, so that it does not break out into all the Works of Unrighteousness?

The *third Spring of Injustice* among Men is *Profuseness and Luxury*. When Persons affect to live in a manner above what their Circumstances will afford, they are tempted to intrench upon the Property of their Neighbour, either by Cheating, or by Violence.

It is the Language of Luxury, "I must indulge my Appetite, my Table must be furnished with a costly Variety, and I must eat and drink with Elegance, (as is the modish Phrase.) I must treat my Friends, when they visit me, with fashionable Entertainments; I must keep fine Company, and make a Figure in the World; I must appear in such an Equipage as my Neighbour allows himself, though he be ten times richer than I am. I must have many Changes of Raiment, for it is a mean and vulgar thing to appear too often in the same Dress: My House must be furnished after the Mode, and I must shine at Home and Abroad in Silks or in Silver; for I can't bear the Thought that such or such a one should outshine and overtop me." Then the Patrimony is sold or mortgaged to raise present Supplies, and the rich Food and Clothing, and luxurious Expences of a Twelve-month, devour and swallow up seven Years Income, or the Gain of half their Lives.

What remains then, when their own Substance is not sufficient to supply their Vanity, but that they make

make an Inroad upon the Property of their Neighbour? They run deep into Debt with the Artificer and Trader, and they never concern themselves how to make Payment. The Workman has built them Palaces, instead of such common Dwellings as their Character requires, and the Artificers of various kinds have furnished out their Bravery of Apparel or Equipage: But the unhappy Creditors are ready to starve in tattered Raiment, through the Oppression and Injustice of their luxurious Neighbour. And when they make a modest Demand of what is due to them, they meet with nothing but a Frown or a Jest, and the reproachful Names of *saucy* and *impertinent*. But *Woe to him that covets an evil Covetousness to his House, that he may set his Nest on high; for the Stone shall cry out of the Wall against the Oppressor: The Beam out of the Timber shall answer it, and shall bear Witness against Unrighteousness; Hab. ii. 9.*

This is the crying Guilt of many, and very commonly practised in this City, in greater or in less Degrees; but perhaps the profuse Wretch pursues a bolder Course of Injustice, and betakes himself to *Robbery and Plunder*: He lies at watch on the Highways, he seizes and assaults the innocent Traveller, and deprives him of his Wealth and every thing valuable, in order to support his own wild and extravagant Expences. *Luxury* must be fed, though *Justice* be starved; and *Luxury* must be clothed, tho' *Justice* go naked.

My Hearers perhaps will think themselves unconcerned in all this Story, and take no Share of the Conviction to themselves, nor do I know any of them to whom half this Charge belongs. But let it be considered, that Men don't usually rise to this Degree of Madness all at once. *Unrighteousness* has several Steps and Stages in its Race; if we indulge our Appetites, and spread our Tables, or form our Apparel or our Furniture but a little beyond our Income, if we once begin to admit such a manner of

Life

Life and Expence as exceeds our Estate, in order to please our own sensual or vain Inclinations, or to vie with our Neighbours, we expose our selves to most evident Temptations of Injustice, and lead our Souls into sinful Snares. "We can't live frugal as our Fathers did: The Fashion is altered, and we must follow it, whether the Purse can bear it or no".

Hence arise the *impetuous Desires of hasty and extravagant Gains by Gaming*, in order to recover what is lost by Luxury. Men venture largely upon the *Turn of a Dye*, and defraud their honest Creditors of their Bread and Life, to pay (what they call in their *Cant*) the *Debts of Honour*. A wanton sort of Justice and Illegal Equity!

'Tis this luxurious Fashion of Life that hath filled our Land with the *Itch of Gaming*; and if the *Turn of a Wheel* can intitle them to Thousands, they despise the slow and tedious Ways of supplying their Wants by Labour, Business, or Traffick. Thus honest Industry is discouraged, and *Trade*, which is the political Life of our Nation, lies groaning and expiring.

Hence proceeds the wicked Custom of breaking Promises to those whom we deal with, and long Delays of Payment, till we imagine the Debt is cancelled, by being almost forgotten. A vain and criminal Imagination! as though the daily Increase of *Interest*, and the Patience of the Creditor, could make the *Principal* cease to be due! As though *Time*, and *unjust Delay*, could pay Debts without Money.

Hence flows the *unrighteous Practice of borrowing without any Design to pay*, which is gross and shameful Iniquity: I would hope none of the Professors of Religion have so far abandoned all Sense of Righteousness. Yet there are too many, who, when once they have borrowed, grow so careless and negligent of Payment, that it brings a Disgrace upon their Profession, and a Blot upon their Character. Pro-  
fuse

fuse and thoughtless Sinners, who run in debt to every one that will trust them for the daily Conveniencies of Life! Though they have no reasonable Prospect of paying, yet they ask their Neighbour to lend, with a free and courageous Countenance, and put a bold Face upon their venturous Iniquity, being too proud to let their Poverty be known. But the God of Justice beholds the Crime, and writes their Names down in his Book among the *Unrighteous*, Psal. xxxvii. 21. *The Wicked borroweth, and payeth not again.*

Hence it comes to pass, that there are so many *Bankrupts* in our Days, even among the Professors of strict Religion: A shameful and an ungodly Practice, if it arise from Luxury and Profuseness, or from a careless Neglect of their proper Affairs! It was thought sufficient, in the Days of our Fathers, to deserve an Expulsion from the Church of *Christ*, unless they could evidently make it appear, that it was merely by the unforeseen and frowning Providences of God, they were reduced to this Extremity. There is many a Man hath groan'd away his latter Years in Poverty, and perhaps in a cold Prison, and in most forlorn Circumstances of Life, by means of the Profuseness of his Youth: And he has been taught to read the *Guilt of his Luxury and Injustice* in a long and painful Lesson.

But a *profuse and sensual Humour* is not only the Spring of Unrighteousness among *Persons of better Rank* and Circumstance in the World, but it tempts *Servants* also to be unjust to their Masters: They will now and then provide a Treat for themselves and their Friends; they must eat nicely, and drink to excess: And thus they waste their Master's Substance. They must keep good Company in the World, and now and then spend a licentious Hour or two, while their just and reasonable Service at home is neglected; and perhaps the Purse of the Master must pay for all.

Under



Under the same Head I may bring a Charge of *Injustice* against the *careless and wasteful Servant*, who persuades himself that his Master is rich enough, and therefore he is not solicitous to buy or sell, or manage any Affairs for him to the best Advantage. He permits the Goods of his Master to be wasted or embezzled, he grows liberal and generous at his Master's Cost, and has no Thought of the golden Rule of our Saviour, to manage his Master's Concerns with the same Frugality and Conduct, as he would expect a Servant should do for him. But 'tis time I proceed to the next Particular.

The *fourth* Occasion of Injustice is *Sloth and Idleness*. For the *slothful Man is a Brother to him that is a great Waster*; Prov. xviii. 9.

Whosoever wants the Necessaries, or the Conveniences of Life, is bound to obtain them by Labour and Diligence, if he is not possessed of them by any other Methods of favourable Providence. *In the Sweat of thy Brows shalt thou eat thy Bread*, was the Command given to *Adam*, when he was turned out of Paradise, and forfeited his Property in the Fruits of *Eden*. But when once a Person gets an Aversion to Business, when he finds a Pleasure in 'Santering and Trifles, and indulges Idleness and a lazy Life; then he is tempted to seek the Supports and Comforts of Nature by some Practices of Unrighteousness. *The slothful Man will be clothed with Rags*, unless he procure better Clothing by Fraud or Violence, Prov. xxiii. 21.

Hence it is that Persons learn the *Art of Stealing*, and possess themselves of the Goods or the Money of their Neighbour by *Thievery*. They mark out the Houses in the Day, and break them up at Midnight for Plunder. *They remove the ancient Land-Marks, to enlarge their own Borders; They violently take away Flocks, and feed upon them: They go forth to their unrighteous Work in the Morning, and rise betimes for a Prey: They reap down the Corn in their* Neigh-

Neighbour's Field, and the Wicked gather the Vintage. They cause the Naked to lodge without Clothing, and take away the Sheaf from the Hungry. These are they that rebel against the Light, they abide not in the Paths thereof. Though God does not lay Folly to them, nor punish their Crimes by his immediate Judgments, yet his eyes are upon their Ways, Job xxiv. 2,--- 23. And many times his Providence brings their Crimes to light, and they are punished for their Iniquity by the Sentence of the Judge. O what a Shame and Scandal is it, that in a Nation professing *Christianity*, there should be such Multitudes trained up to the pilfering Trade, and educated for Infamy, for Transportation, and the Gibbet!

There are others, whose Hands refuse to Labour, and whose Temper of Mind delights in Idleness, but they venture not upon these bolder Crimes; they learn other *unrighteous Arts of Cheating and Falshood*, and fall into the same evil Practices which I have just before described under the Head of *Luxury*. But when *Luxury*, *Pride*, and *Sloth* join their Forces together, the Temptation to *Injustice* becomes exceeding strong, and there are few who have Power to resist it.

Such was the *unjust Steward*, whom our blessed Saviour represents in a *Parable*, procuring himself a way of living by cheating his Lord; *Luke* xvi. 1, 2, 3, 4. He had *wasted his Master's Goods*, and he was to be cashier'd from his Service. *What shall I do*, said he, I have not been used to work, *I cannot dig*; there's the Sloth of the Man: He had lived well in his Stewardship, and was grown proud, *To beg I am ashamed*. Well, I can purloin no more of my Lord's Estate for my self, but I can do it for his Debtors; I will cheat him in his Accounts, and make all his Debtors my Friends, by cancelling a good Part of their Obligations; and then I shall get a Livelihood amongst them. O that all such Practices had been found no where but in *Parables*!

Some

Some that have been reduced to Poverty by Idleness, and have borrowed boldly what they could never pay, yet wipe their Mouths, and think themselves innocent and righteous, because they have not a Sufficiency to make Payment : Whereas, in truth, 'tis their own *Sloth* that makes them Poor, and keeps them so. Some of these idle Creatures waste their Days in Drowsiness and Inactivity. *A little more Sleep, a little more Slumber ; so Poverty comes upon them like an armed Man* without resistance. Others are a little more sprightly, and they spend their Hours in an inquisitive Impertinence, in publick News and private Slander; in searching and tattling of the Affairs of other Persons and their Families, while they eat, and drink, and live upon the Labour of the Diligent, and unjustly serve themselves out of the Industry of their Neighbour. So the worthless *Drone* wastes the Summer's Day in buzzing and trifling, he gads abroad, and wanders with idle Flight; then he returns, and feeds upon the Honey that the *Bee* has gather'd, and abuses the Industry of a better Animal.

St. Paul takes notice of this sort of People at *Thessalonica*, who called themselves *Christians*, and reproves them with just Severity ; *We hear there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are Busy-bodies. Now them that are such, we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with Quietness they work, and eat their own Bread: For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat ;* 2 Thess. iii. 10, &c. And in his Letter to the *Ephesians*, he exhorts the Thief to Diligence. *Let him that stole, steal no more, but rather let him labour, working with his Hands, the Thing which is good ;* and that not only for his own Support, but that he may have to give to him that needeth, Ephes. iv. 28. How little do those *Christians* read their Bibles ! Or how little do they mind what the great Apostle tells them ! They profess

feels they were never brought up to work, and give that Answer roundly as a sufficient Excuse for *Idleness*: And therefore when they become poor and necessitous, they think it the Duty of others to maintain them, without stretching out their own Hand for any thing but to beg and receive. They will apply themselves to no Employment, though they are told their Duty continually: Their *Pride*, *Indolence*, and *Sloth* withhold them from Labour, though they are called to it daily in the loudest Language in which God now-a-days speaks to his Creatures; and that is the Voice of *Reason*, of *Scripture*, and of *Providence*.

But there is another sort of *Sloth* and *Idleness*, that leads on to the Practice of Injustice too, and that is when Men are busy in their Trades, and the Affairs of Life, but *seldom look into their Accounts*, or *perhaps keep none at all*: And thus they live upon the spend, and are utterly ignorant whether their Income will support it. They eat and drink with daily Cheerfulness, and sleep sound upon their Pillow, while they know not whether their Food and Raiment, and even the Bed they rest on, be their own or no. Perhaps they have let their Accounts run long behind, they are a little Jealous of their Circumstances, and then it is an unpleasant and tedious Task to take a thorough Review of them. By this means they run on venturing and heedless, till Justice overtakes them, and Ruin seizes them at once. Then they see what a shameful and cruel Inroad they have made upon their Neighbour's Property: They find then that they have fed and clothed themselves and their Household out of their Neighbour's Estate. What shall I say to Persons of this Character? Their Souls are generally harden'd on all Sides against Conviction, and it is with much Difficulty they are ever brought to confess their own Folly, their Sloth and Unrighteousness. Ask thy self, O Man, O Woman, ask thy self this short and solemn Question, *Am I willing my Neighbour should*



*should deal thus with me, and spend my Substance for his daily Support.*

Here let it be observed, that I would always except from this Accusation such as are *meer Children*, and cannot Work, or such as are *aged* and past all Ability of Labour, such as are *weak and sick*, and rendered thereby utterly incapable of working, and such as *seek work with honest Diligence*, and would be glad to be employ'd in any thing they can do, if they could find others to employ them. Some of these indigent and necessitous Persons are in every City, and they seem to be marked out by Providence as the proper Objects of *Compassion* and *Bounty*, and are not to be blended with the *slothful* and *idle* Creatures in the general Charge of *Unrighteousness*.

*Fifthly*, The next Spring of Injustice is *Malice and Envy*. This is the vilest of all, and the most like the Devil; for it contrives Mischief, and brings Injury upon *others*, without seeking Gain and Advantage to *Self*. This is a vile Iniquity, and has a great deal of the Spirit of Cruelty and of Hell in it, where Ill-nature and Spite reign and triumph.

Though *Envy* and *Malice* awaken and excite the Sinner to Acts of Unrighteousness and Violence, and tempts us to rob our Neighbour of *what is his Due*; yet these vicious Principles aim more frequently to disturb the *Peace*, or *Health* and *good Name* of our Neighbour, than to injure his *Estate*. It is Wrath and Hatred that boils up the Blood into Fury and Revenge, and moves us to *smite our Neighbour with the Fist of Wickedness*; nor is the guilty Passion allay'd till it has practis'd Mischief to his Body, or his Reputation, or his Family, or to something that belongs to him. Hence proceed *Murders* and *Death*, and all the Train of Evils and Injuries of the cruel and bloody kind. It was from this Principle that *Cain* slew *Abel* his Brother, that the Sons of *Jacob* sold *Joseph* into Slavery: It was from this Principle that *Sanballat* and *Tobiab* join'd their Rage and their Coun-

selves against the *Jews*, that they might hinder the rebuilding of *Jerusalem*, and endeavour to destroy the Builders, and throw down the Work ; *Nehemiah* ii.

10.

I hope there are no Examples of this flagrant *Injustice* to be found among us who profess Piety. But are there none of us guilty of some lesser Injuries rising from the same Principle ? Are there none of us that indulge our Tongues to backbite and slander, to make our Neighbours look odious, or to make our selves easy or merry ? This is to play the *Madman*, who casts abroad *Fire-brands, Arrows, and Death*, and says, *Am I not in sport ?* *Prov.* xxvi. 18. Are there none of us that delight to teize, and vex, and torture our Neighbour by disagreeable Speeches and sly Reproach ? Do we never *envy* and *provoke one another*, contrary to the Apostle's express Prohibition ? *Gal.* v. 26. Do we not take pleasure to repeat the Things that make each other uneasy, in order to vent the Gall within us, and scatter the Venom upon our Neighbour's good Name ? This is *Malice* and *Unrighteousness* together ; a complicated Crime, which one would think should be abhorred by every Christian, if one did not frequently see and feel the Practice of it among the Professors of the Name of *Christ*. I might well compare such Creatures to a *Wasp* or a *Hornet*, who first teize and disquiet us with their endless Humming, and e'er we can get rid of them, they fix their painful Sting in our Flesh ; tho' neither the Pain nor the teizing Vexation they give us, can procure any Conveniency to those peevish Insects, those noisy Animals of a little angry Soul.

If we are *Poor*, this evil Humour tempts us to envy the Riches of our Neighbour, and we magnify and exalt them beyond the Truth, that we may give some Colour to our splenetick and uneasy Carriage. If we are afflicted, or *in Pain*, we envy the Welfare and the Ease of others, we enlarge our Paraphases upon their Blessings, and blacken their Character,  
that

that they may appear unworthy of such Favours, and worthy of our Indignation and Envy. "When shall the Time come, O Lord Jesus, thou King of Righteousness, and King of Peace, when shall that Day appear, that Ephraim shall not envy Judah, nor Judah molest Ephraim? When shall it be that no ravenous Beast shall come a-near Zion, and there shall be nothing to hurt or destroy in all thy holy Mountain?"

The last Spring of Injustice that I shall mention, is Unbelief, and Distrust of the Providence of God. When Persons are in low Circumstances, they are sometimes hurried by the Power of this Temptation to use sinful Means in order to obtain what they want, or at least what they fancy they want for the comfortable Support of Life. The Word of God has many engaging Promises in it, to those who are diligent in their Duty: Though the Soul of the Sluggard desireth, and hath nothing, yet the Soul of the Diligent shall be made fat, Prov. xiii. 4. It is the hand of a diligent Man that maketh rich, for it has the Blessing of the Lord upon it. God can increase the handful of Meal in the Barrel, and lengthen out the Stream of Oil from the little Cruise, that the Debts of the Widow may be paid thereby, and her Family find Provision, 1 Kings xvii. And even since the Days of Miracles have ceas'd, there are many Christians who have liv'd by Faith, and have found Wonders of Support, not much inferior to this antient Miracle.

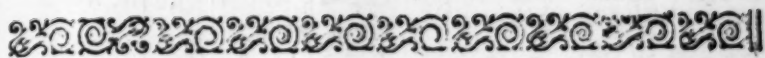
But those who know not the way of living by Faith, are too ready to indulge themselves in some little pilfering or cheating Methods to procure a Subsistence. Thus Unbelief has a plain Tendency to Unrighteousness, but he that believeth shall not make haste, Isa. xxviii. 16. He that believes the Care of God toward his own People, and puts his Trust in his Redeemer, who is Lord of all Things, he that lives upon the Covenant of God daily, he shall not make haste to make himself rich, or to possess himself of

the Comforts of Life by any Methods of Injustice; his Faith and Diligence shall be rewarded at least with daily Bread.

And now having finished this Subject, I must beg pardon of my Reader for insisting so largely on those two Virtues, *Justice* and *Truth*, in my Text. But they are of so divine a Necessity to make up the Character of a Christian, they are of so valuable Importance to the Glory of the Gospel, and so shameful an Inroad has been made upon them in various Instances in our degenerate Age, that I was willing to attempt something to retrieve this Part of Godliness: And O may the convincing and sanctifying Spirit of God attend it with his sacred Influences, that those who are call'd by the sacred Name of *Christian*, may never bring a Blemish upon it by deserving the Characters of *False* and *Unjust*!







*The second Part of the Twenty Sixth*  
S E R M O N.

THE next Virtue mentioned in my Text, is  
*Purity; Whatsoever Things are pure, think on  
these Things.*

The Sense of this Word *αἷα* in the Greek is extend-  
ed so far by some Criticks, as to include *Temperance*  
*in eating and drinking*, as well as *Chastity and Modesty*  
*in all our Words and Behaviour*; and thus it signifies  
almost the same with *Sobriety*, and implies a *Restraint*  
*upon all the excessive and irregular Appetites that human*  
*Nature is subject to.*

Under these two Heads I shall treat of *Purity* brief-  
ly, and shew under each of them how the *Light of*  
*Nature*, and how the *Gospel of Christ* requires the  
Practice of it.

I. *Temperance in eating and drinking* may be included  
in this Command of *Purity*, for we can hardly sup-  
pose the Apostle omitted so necessary a Virtue, and  
it is not directly mention'd at all, if it be not im-  
plied here. 'Tis not beneath the Doctrine of *Chri-*  
*stianity* to condescend to give Rules about the most  
common Affairs of human Life, even *Food and Rai-*  
*ment*. It's a piece of Impurity to imitate the *Swine*,  
and to gorge ourselves beyond measure; to give up  
ourselves to fulfil every luscious Appetite, and every  
luxurious Inclination of the *Taste*.

An Indulgence of this sort of Vice, what infinite  
Disorders doth it bring upon Mankind! If a Man  
would read the Character of a *Drunkard* painted in  
very bright and proper Colours, and receive the

fouleſt Ideas of it in the faireſt Oratory, he cannot find a better Deſcription than *Prov. xxiii, 29, &c.* *Who bath Woe? Who bath Sorrow? Who bath Contentions? Who bath Babbling? Who bath Wounds without Cauſe? Who bath Redneſs of Eyes? They that tarry long at the Wine, they that go to ſeek mixt Wine. Look not therefore upon the Wine when it is red, when it giveth its Colour in the Cup, when it moveth itſelf aright.* Some Men in our Age well underſtand what *Solomon* here means. *But at the laſt it biteth like a Serpent, and ſtingeth like an Adder.* The Pleaſure will be attended with intolerable Pain and mortal Injury, when the Exceſs of Liquor ſhall work like ſo much Venom poured into the Veins, and caſt thee into Diſeaſes as incurable as the Biting of any Serpent; it will do thee more Miſchief than an Adder with all his Poiſon. There are many that have felt the Words of *Solomon* true, when their voluptuous Sins have been dreadfully recompens'd with Ruin to their Soul and Body.

But the inſpired Writer dwells upon the loathſome Subject, and bids us mark the particular Effects of it: *Thine Eyes ſhall behold ſtrange Women, and thine Heart ſhall utter perverſe Things*; that is, ſays a learned Paraphraſt \* upon the Text, “Thy Thoughts  
“ will not only grow confuſed, and all Things appear to thee otherwiſe than they are; but luſtful  
“ and adulterous Deſires will be ſtirred up, which  
“ thou canſt not Rule; and thy Mouth being without a Bridle, will break forth into unſeemly, nay,  
“ filthy, ſcurrilous, or, perhaps, blaſphemous Language, without reſpect to God or Man.” *Yea, thou ſhalt be,* ſaith the wiſe Man, *as he that lieth down in the miſt of the Sea, or as he that lieth upon the top of a Maſt*: i. e. “Thou wilt ſottiſhly run thyſelf  
“ into the extremeſt Hazards, without any apprehenſions of Danger, being no more able to direct

\* Biſhop Patrick.

“ thy Course, than a Pilot who snores when a Ship  
 “ is tossed in the midst of the Sea ; no more able to  
 “ take notice of the Peril thou art in, than he that  
 “ falls asleep on the Top of a Mast, where he was  
 “ set to keep the Watch.” *They have stricken me,*  
*shalt thou say, and I was not sick ; they have beaten me,*  
*and I felt it not. When I shall awake, I will seek it yet*  
*again.* ’Tis as if the wise Man had said : “ That to  
 “ compleat thy Misery, thou shalt not only be  
 “ mocked, and abused, and beaten, but thou shalt  
 “ be as senseless as if no harm had befallen thee ;  
 “ And no sooner wilt thou open thine Eyes, but  
 “ thou wilt stupidly seek an Occasion to be drunk,  
 “ and be beaten again.”

My Friends, have ye never seen a *Drunkard* make  
 that odious Figure, in which *Solomon* represents him?  
 You find human Nature is constant to it self : It ap-  
 pears now in *Britain*, just as it is described in the  
 Days of old at *Jerusalem* in all its vicious Excesses.  
 There is a great Degree of Likeness between our  
 Forefathers Intemperance, and their Children of  
 late Posterity. One would think one such a Specta-  
 cle as this, or the meer Report of it, with an Assu-  
 rance of the Truth, should be enough to forbid our  
 Lips the Excess of Liquor, and to set a Guard upon  
 our selves in the Hour of Temptation.

Not only those who overwhelm themselves with  
 strong Drink, and forget *Reason and Themselves*, but  
 those that are *mighty to drink Wine*, have a severe  
 Censure cast upon them, and a Curse in the Book of  
 God. *Isa. v. 22.* not only *Woe to them*, ver. 17. *that*  
*rise up early in the Morning, that they may find strong*  
*Drink, and continue till Night, till Wine inflame them ;*  
*but woe to them that are mighty to drink Wine*, even  
 though they are not utterly overcome by it, to the  
 Disorder and Disgrace of their Understandings. The  
 Reason is, because Nature will not bear such a Quan-  
 tity of Wine or strong Liquors at first ; and ’tis pre-  
 sumed Men have forced Nature beyond its original  
 Capacity,

Capacity, and thus have grown up, by Degrees of Sin, to such a Strength in Drinking. *These are they that call Evil Good, and Good Evil, and that glory in their Shame.*

Hearken to thy Father's Advice, O Youth, and despise not thy Mother's Counsel; *Hear thou, my Son, and be wise, and guide thine Heart in the way of Temperance. Be not amongst Wine-Bibbers, amongst riotous Eaters of Flesh,* ver. 19. Youth is greedy of Pleasure, and in danger of being corrupted by it; therefore avoid the Society of *Drunkards and Gluttons*. You see they are join'd together in the Prohibition and Threatning of the Word of God, for *the Glutton and the Drunkard shall both come to Poverty*. A wanton Indulgence of the Taste will tempt Men to Reveling and Riot, thence follows a Neglect of all Business; and many a Prodigal, who had a fair Estate, is by this means become a Beggar or a Prisoner. Let us be watchful therefore when we sit down at a plentiful Table, and *put a Knife*, as it were, *to our Throat*, if we feel the Danger of a sharp and wanton Appetite; let the Guard of our Virtue be as sharp and active as our Thirst or Hunger. Let us *not be desirous of feasting our selves with Dainties*, for they too often prove *deceitful Meat*: And though they are never so tempting to the Palate, yet they may disturb the Health of the Body, or indispose the Mind for the Service of Virtue. But this leads me to the next general Head, and that is,

To consider *how the Light of Nature condemns this Vice, this sort of Impurity.*

If it were my Business to make a Flourish with learned Citations, it were an easy Matter to bring the *Greeks and Romans* hither to pass Sentence upon the *Glutton and the Drunkard*, and all the Luxury of the Taste; for 'tis too mean an Indulgence either for a Man or a Christian. It does not become human Nature to endanger the Welfare of all its Powers, and enslave them all to the *single Sense of Tasting*. "I

" am



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“ am greater, says *Seneca*, and born to greater Things, than to be a Slave to this Body, or to live meerly to become a Strainer of Meats and Drinks.” The wisest of Men, and the best Writers of all Ages, even in the *Heathen* Nations, have pass’d their heavy Censures on these impure and brutal Follies, whereby we are reduced to the Rank of Beasts that Perish, or perhaps sunk below them by the Practices of *Intemperance*; for there are but few of that lower Rank of Creatures, who swill themselves beyond the Demands of Nature; or, at least, beyond what Nature is able to bear.

Let us argue a little upon this Head from the *Principles of Reason*, and consider that the chief Designs of Food are these two, *The Support of our Nature*, and the *Refreshment of our Spirits*. Therefore give Food to him that is hungry, that Life may be maintain’d: Give Drink to him that is thirsty, to assist the Support of Life, and to refresh it. Give strong Drink to him that is ready to faint, that his Spirits may be recruited, and Wine to him that is heavy of Heart, that he may forget his Sorrows. ’Tis evident that every thing, which goes beyond the mere *Necessity of Nature* for its Support, does not presently become sinful; because the *Refreshment of Nature* is also one End and Design of our Food. Remember that the *Supports of Nature* are designed by the God of Nature to make us fit for all the Services and Duties of Life, and the *Refreshments of it* are ordained by the same Author of Nature to render us chearful in the Discharge of those Duties. The one is necessary to give us a Capacity to perform, and the other proper to render the Performance chearful and delightful to us, and to intermingle our Labour with such innocent Delights as may awaken our Thankfulness to the Bounty of our Creator.

Thence it will follow, that the *Rich* are allowed to furnish their Tables with a Variety of pleasing and grateful Food; and that Feasts designed for a chearful

ful Enjoyment of our Friends, are by no means forbidden by the Light of Reason, or of Scripture : For we gain Vigour for Action, by having the Spirits raised and exhilarated. But it will follow also, that when we have our Choice of what we shall eat or drink, we ought to determine not meerly by Pleasure and Appetite, nor feed till we are unfit for Service. If we know, or have a good Guess beforehand, that this Cup, or this Dish, will render us unfit for the proper Business of the Day, or incapable of the several Duties we are called to ; yet if, for the sake of meer Sensuality, we venture upon it, God will number it among our *Sins against the Light of Nature*. Those Ends therefore, for which God has ordained our various Food, both in his Creation and in his Providence, namely, the *Support of Nature*, and its *Refreshment* ; let these be our Designs in eating, and give Rules for our Determination what Food we should partake of.

It must be granted indeed, that a *sickly Person* may be indulged in more *Solicitude about Food*, and may make it a matter of more distinguishing Choice than Persons vigorous and healthy. But then the *great End* must still be kept in the Eye, that is, the Recovery of Strength for future Service, where they are much cut off from present Work : For neither the Sick nor the Healthy, should *live for the sake of eating*, but both should *eat for the sake of living and working*.

Now if the *Light of Nature* requires such *Purity and Temperance*, how much more doth the *Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ* oblige us to it ?

I. It is the Command of our Redeemer, that we *take heed of Surfeiting and Drunkenness, lest our Hearts at any time be overcharged with them*, Luk. xxi. 34. And what Caution doth the holy Apostle give, Eph. v. 18. *Be not drunken with Wine, wherein is Excess, but be ye filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in Psalms, and Hymns, and spiritual Songs. Don't be so indulgent*.

indulgent to your Palate and your Glass, as to let Excess of Wine overtake you, lest you *Christians* should do as *Heathens* have done, and break out into irregular Songs, and licentious or profane Mirth; but seek rather the largest Influences of the blessed Spirit, and give a sacred Loose to a devout Frame: Break out into divine Psalms or Songs; comfort your selves, and edify your Neighbours thereby. In *Rom. iii. 13.* St. Paul advises us how we should behave our selves in this Point; *Let us walk honestly, as in the Day, not in Rioting and Drunkenness; but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not Provision for the Flesh, to fulfil it in the Lusts thereof.* Put on the Spirit of the Gospel, and the Ornaments of Christianity, and then you cannot for shame seek the Pleasures of the Brute, nor sink down into the base Impurities of animal Nature: If you have put on the Lord *Jesus Christ*, and are his Disciples indeed, then look like *Christians*; let the very *Life of Christ be manifest in your Lives*: Live above these animal Desires, these lower Designs of the *Flesh*, which is not the chief Nature of the Man, much less should it be the chief End of Christians to gratify it.

II. Let Christians consider, that *the original Ruin of their Natures, Soul and Body, arose from the Indulgence of a foolish Appetite.* When our Mother *Eve* saw the *Fruit* of the forbidden Tree, she thought it was *pleasant to the Eye, and good for Food*: She tasted it her self, and tempted *Adam* to the Sin that ruin'd him and all his Off-spring. When therefore a Temptation to this sort of Guilt appears, let us think of all the Miseries of our fallen State, and not dare to repeat that Crime, which had such dismal Consequences. It brought Iniquity, Pain, and Death into human Nature, and begun all that Dishonour to God, and all that Mischief among Men, that ever was found in this lower World.

III. Every

III. Every Saint ought to have a mortal Quarrel with the *Flesh*, because he carries about the Seeds of Iniquity in it, and the Springs of perverse Appetites, which ought always to be kept under, lest our very Spirits become carnal, and we lose our heavenly Crown. Therefore, saith the Apostle, 1 Cor. ix. 27. *I keep under my Body, and bring it into Subjection*, and endeavour to be temperate in all Things, that running in the Christian Race, I may obtain the Prize. It is the Business of a Christian to eat and drink in due Season, for Strength and Refreshment, not for Luxury and Drunkenness, which Solomon forbids to Princes, Eccles. x. 17. It was an excellent Saying of that holy Man, Mr. Joseph Allein; “ I sit down to my Table, not  
“ to please my Appetite, or to pamper my Flesh,  
“ but to maintain a Servant of Jesus Christ, that he  
“ may be fit for the Lord’s Work.”

IV. The Saints should be pure and holy, even in the Affairs of the natural Life; for they have Meat to eat that the World knows not of; they drink of the Pleasures that flow from God, and from his Covenant; and therefore should not be over solicitous about pleasing their meaner Appetites. Those that indulge themselves in carnal Delicacies, and make Enquiry for the Pleasures of the *Flesh*, as the main Business of Life, *What shall I eat, and what shall I drink?* Those that live in a round of Sensuality, they debase their Souls, make themselves unfit for the Duties and Pleasures of a Christian, unfit for divine Communications, for holy Fellowship, heavenly Meditation, and lively Exercises of Faith, upon unseen Things; they damp their Zeal for God, blunt their Relish for religious Delights, and are perpetually defiling their own Consciences. These are they that make their God their Belly, while they profess to be Christians. But the Apostle in *Philippians* iii. 18, 19. tells us, whatsoever they profess, they are Enemies of the Cross  
of



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*of Christ, and I cannot speak of it, says he, without weeping.*

Now if there be any such Sinners amongst us, such *Slaves to a paultry Appetite*, that makes it a Business of too solemn and solicitous Enquiry, *How we shall regale the Palate, and gratify the Taste?* If there are any of us that know not how to forbid our selves a savoury or luscious Dish, even though we know or expect it will discompose the Flesh or the Mind: If we have not Temperance enough to deny the superfluous or excessive Glass, when it comes to our Turn, nor Virtue and Courage enough to refuse it, let us take our Share in the Reproofs of this Discourse; and let us remember that we have had fair Warning this Day from the Word of God, that we may not drown our Souls in sensual Indulgences, and make our selves unfit for the Duties of Life, or for the Business or the Joy of Heaven.





# SERMON XXVII.

Christian Morality, viz. Chastity, &c.

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PHILIP. iv. 8.

— *Whatsoever Things are pure* — *think on these Things.*

Ὅσα ἀγαθὰ, &c.

**P**URITY of Heart and Life, in the perfect Beauty of it, belongs to no Man since our original Apostacy. That foul and shameful Departure from God, has rendered us all *unholy* and *unclean*. But we are recalled to seek our ancient Glory, by the Messengers of Heaven, and the Ministry of the Gospel. The Apostle exhorts us to it in the Text. If the Word *pure* be taken in its largest Extent, it may include in it *Temperance* in Meats and Drinks, as well as *Chastity* in Behaviour. You have heard already a Discourse of *Temperance*, with so hateful an Account of the Crimes of *Gluttony* and *Drunkennes*, that I hope my Hearers have conceived a sacred Aversion to such Sensualities.

Let us now proceed to the *second* Sense implied in the Word, and that is *Modesty and Chastity of Speech and Behaviour*. This is a most eminent, and most undeniable Part of that *Purity*, which St. Paul here requires ; and this, in many of his Epistles, he in-

sists

sists upon as necessary, in order to make up the Character of a *Christian*, and render it honourable; and St. *Peter* recommends it to the pious Women in his Days, as a means of the Conversion of their Husbands, who were *Gentiles*: *That they who obeyed not the Word of the Gospel, might be won to a good Esteem of Christianity, while they beheld the chaste Conversation of their Wives*; 1 Pet. iii. 1, 2.

This *Virtue* stands in Opposition to those several *Vices*, which are distinguished by different Names in Scripture, such as *Adultery*, *Fornication*, *Lasciviousness*. (1.) *Adultery*, when one of the Persons who are guilty of impure Embraces, is under the sacred Bonds of Marriage. By the Commission of this Sin there is Injury done to another Family, and thus it is not only an Offence against the Laws of Purity, but a Violation of the Laws of *Justice*. (2.) *Fornication*, when both the guilty Persons are free and unmarried. It has been sufficiently proved by many Writers, that this is utterly unlawful, howsoever some have attempted to varnish the Guilt, and excuse the Crime. (3.) *Lasciviousness*, which consists in giving a Loose to those impure Thoughts, Words, and Actions, which have an apparent Tendency toward the Sins before-mentioned. Besides these, there are other Names and Instances of unclean Abominations, which I wish could be utterly rooted out from human Nature, by burying them in everlasting Silence.

If I were to fetch *Arguments from Reason* and the *Light of Nature*, I might make it appear that these things are criminal, and contrary to those *Rules of Morality*, which were written in the Heart of Man. And perhaps they would have appeared in the same guilty Colours to all Men, if the *Light of Nature* were not obscured by corrupt Passions, and licentious Appetite. The Practice of these impure Vices is inconsistent with the great Ends for which God has formed our Natures, has raised us above the Beasts

that perish, and has inclined Mankind to form themselves into Societies for mutual Benefit. The Brutes, who have no Nature superior to the Animal, are not governed by the same Laws: But the God of Nature, who has made us *compound Beings*, and (shall I say?) hath joined an *Animal* and an *Angel* together to make up a Man, expects that the *Angel* should govern the *Animal* in all its natural Propensities, and confine it within the Rules of Religion and the social Life.

These Vices are also contrary to the *solemn Ordinances of Marriage*, which the blessed God instituted in Paradise in a State of Innocency, and designed to continue through all Generations. If these Impurities of Conversation were publickly permitted, all the tender and most engaging Names of Relation and Kindred, such as *Father*, *Sister*, and *Brother*, would be confounded, and almost abolished among Mankind; and what dismal Consequences would hence ensue? In what helpless Circumstances would Children be then brought into this World? And many of the Ends of human Society would become frustrate and vain.

I confess indeed, that several of these *Vices* were practised in the *Heathen* World without any inward Remorse of the Mind, without private Reproof or publick Shame. Some of these *Impurities* were allowed by the Laws of their Country; some were indulged at Festivals, and sometimes they were mingled with their religious Ceremonies, and made part of the Worship of their Gods: Idol Gods! Abominable Religions! Base and shameful Worshippers! For it is a Shame, saith the Apostle, *even to speak of those things that are done in secret, those unfruitful Works of Darknefs*; Ephes. v. 11, 12. Yet there have been several of the grave, the sober, and the wisest among the *Gentiles*, who being constrained by the meer Force of Reason, have spoke against these corrupt Practices, and have adorned the Virtue of *Chastity* with many honourable Encomiums.

But



But how doubtful soever this Duty hath been reckoned among the *Heathen* Nations, yet it is made necessary by the Principles of the *Christian* Religion, and a strong and severe Guard of *Prohibitions* and *Threatnings* is set all around to secure the Practice of it. Now that I may speak of this Subject as becomes me, and recommend it in Language pure and undefiled, I shall set before you some of those Scriptures, that bear Witness against all the Violations of it, under the following Heads.

I. *The express Precepts of the Law of God* demand the first Place in this Catalogue of divine Testimonies against *Impurity*, for they were delivered at Mount *Sinai* to many hundred Thousands at once, they were ushered in with Lightning, and pronounced with Thunder. *Exod. xx. 14. Thou shalt not commit Adultery.* This is the seventh Command: And that there may not be the least Tendency toward this Sin, the tenth Command is set as a Preservative and Defence, *Thou shalt not so much as covet thy Neighbour's Wife*, ver. 17. In this Epitome and Sum of the Laws of God, whereby he rules his Creatures, which is called the *Decalogue* or *Ten Commandments*, you find this *Vice of Impurity* is twice forbidden; once in the perfect Act, and again in the criminal Wish and Intention. Observe here, that though the Words of these Commands directly point to *Adultery*, yet it appears by the very Reason of Things, as well as from other Passages of Scripture, that *all unchaste Thoughts, Words, and Actions*, are here forbidden, as our younger Years have been taught in the Catechism.

Nor is this a Law that belonged only to the *Jews*, for the *New Testament* mentions and enjoins this Command with the rest, which are of equal Force under the Gospel. *The Law forbids all manuer of Lust*, and faith, *Thou shalt not covet*, *Rom. viii. 7.* The great Apostle puts the *Thessalonians* in mind of what he had

taught them as the Law of Christ. 1 Theff. iv. 2, 3, 4, 5. *For ye know what Comandments we gave you by the Lord Jesus. For this is the Will of God, even your Sanctification, that you should abstain from Fornication: That every one of you should know how to possess his Vessel in Sanctification and Honour; not in the Lust of Concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God.* 'Tis as much as if he had said, it is a Dishonour to Christianity, and a Step of Return towards Heathenism, to give a Loose to impure Lusts. He repeats the same thing, Ephes. iv. 17. *This I say then, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the Vanity of their Minds, having the Understanding darkned, being alienated from the Life of God through the Ignorance that is in them: Who being past feeling, have given themselves over to Lasciviousness, to work Uncleaness with Greediness: But ye have not so learned Christ, if so be ye have been led by him, and taught the Truth as it is in Jesus. In vain ye profess to have learnt the Truth as it is in Jesus, or to have put on Christ, while you practise the same Abominations as ye did before, while ye walk and live as the vile Heathen World.*

II. *The hateful Description of these Sins which is given us by the holy Writers, should print the same odious Image of them upon our Minds, and for ever forbid the Practice.* Solomon, a great King, and a Man of excellent Wisdom, had well known the Mischief and Madness of this sort of Vice; he gives his Son the most solemn Charge against it in various Parts of the *Book of Proverbs*, more especially in the vi<sup>th</sup> and vii<sup>th</sup> Chapters, which he spends entirely upon this Theme; and in the ii<sup>d</sup>, the vi<sup>th</sup>, and the ix<sup>th</sup> Chapters, where he applies near half of them to the same Design; wherein, after he has shewn the insinuating Flatteries of the wanton Woman, he never fails to give notice of some of the terrible Attendants of those that follow her. *For her House inclines to Death, and*  
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*her Paths unto the Dead ; none that go to her return again, neither take they hold of the Paths of Life. There is scarce any Iniquity that does so effectually harden the Heart, and prevent all Repentance. Let not thine Heart therefore decline to her Ways, go not astray in her Paths : For she has cast down many wounded, yea, many strong Men have been slain by her : Her House is the Way to Hell, going down to the Chambers of Death. This leads me to the next Particular.*

III. If we consider *the dismal Effects of these impure Practices, as they are recorded in sacred History*, they should keep our Souls awake, and keep us always to the Watch, lest we be insnared. Behold *Sampson* the strongest of Men, who was a holy *Nazarite*, and devoted to God ; how was he brought down shamefully from the Height of his Glory to Prison and Slavery, to Blindness and Death by the Love of strange Women ! Behold the *Jewish Hero* lying like a thoughtless Fool upon the Lap of his *Delilah*, while the seven sacred Locks of his Head were shaven, and his divine Strength went from him, for the Lord departed ! Behold the wretched Captive with his Eyes bor'd out by the Philistines, bound with Fetters of Brass, and grinding in the Prison House ! Behold the Man who was once their Terror, now become their Sport, their Mockery, and their Laughing-stock in the House of *Dagon* their God ! See him there crush'd to Pieces, and expiring under the Weight of his own Revenge upon his *Philistine* Enemies ; and all this for the Love of a Harlot ! Mark the Mischiefs, the Calamities and the Blood-shed that pursued the House of *David*, when Adultery and Guilt in the Matter of *Uriah* had provoked his God ! See how Sin and Death made wide Inroads into his Household ! See there his Son *Amnon* slain by his Brother *Absalom* for the Folly he had wrought in *Israel*, and the Incest with his Sister *Tamar* ! Think of *Solomon*, the wisest of Men, whose Heart was enticed away by

strange Women from the God and Religion of his Fathers, when he paid such profane and criminal Regard to the Idols of his Mistresses, as to build Temples for them near the Temple of *Jehcvab*; and the Lord was angry with Solomon, when his Wives turned away his Heart after other Gods, and he rent the Kingdom from him in the Days of his Son *Reboboam*, and make a long and fatal Separation between the Tribes of *Israel* for many Generations. And to name no more, turn your Eyes to *Sodom* and *Gomorrab*, and the Cities of the Plain, giving themselves over to Fornication, and going after strange Flesh; mark how the Lord rained Fire and Brimstone out of Heaven upon them, and they are set forth for an Example, suffering the Vengeance of eternal Fire, *Jude* 7.

IV. Think of the dreadful Threatnings that are denounc'd against impure Sinners in the Word of God, and you will find these are flaming Witnesses against their Practice. The Lord hath a Controversy with the Inhabitants of the Land, because of Killing, Stealing, and Adultery; therefore shall the Land mourn. And God seems to forbid the Prophets to give them Reproof, as though he resolv'd to destroy them. *Hosea* iv. 1 — 5. Let no Man strive and reprove another. His Mercy and Forgiveness seem to be put to a stand; How shall I pardon thee for this? saith the Lord; thy Children have forsaken me when I fed them to the full, they then committed Adultery, and assembled themselves in Troops in the Harlots Houses. Shall I not visit them for these things? saith the Lord; and shall not my Soul be avenged on such a Nation as this? *Jer.* v. 7, 9. When the Apostle Paul had represented this sort of Vice in *1 Cor.* iii. as a Defilement of the Body, which is the Temple of God, and the Habitation of the Holy Spirit; he adds this Word of Terror, If any Man defile the Temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the Temple of God is and ought to be holy, and not kept as a Nest for unclean Vermin. Be not deceived; neither Fornicators,



nicators, nor Idolaters, nor Adulterers, nor those who indulge vile Impurities, shall inherit the Kingdom of God, 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10. Such were some of you indeed, says St. Paul to his Converts, but ye are washed and sanctified from these Pollutions, or you could never have been saved. Therefore, saith the same holy Writer, Let neither Fornication, nor any unclean Practices be so much as once named amongst you, as becometh Saints; that is, let them never be named without Abhorrence. For this ye know, that no Whoremonger, nor any unclean Person, nor covetous Man who is an Idolater, hath any Inheritance in the Kingdom of Christ and God. Let no Man deceive you with vain Words; for because of these things cometh the Wrath of God upon the Children of Disobedience, Ephes. v. 3----6. The Visions of St. John in the Book of the Revelations, pronounce the Doom of Whoremongers with the rest of notorious Sinners, and give them their Part in the Lake which burneth with Fire and Brimstone, which is the second Death, Rev. xxi. 38. How impiously bold are those Sinners, who dare venture through all these Terrors to gratify a sensual Appetite! Who can rush upon the Point of the avenging Sword of God, and plunge themselves into everlasting Burnings, to taste the deceitful Baits of impure and forbidden Pleasure?

Before I conclude this Head, I would just hint a few Directions to those who would preserve their Modesty and Virtue, and prevail against all Temptations to Impurity.

1. Set a severe Watch upon your Eyes and your Heart. Keep all the Powers of Nature under a proper Discipline, and guard all the Avenues of the Soul. Secure your Senses without, and your Fancy within, as much as possible, from all Allurements of this kind. Let us remember, that Sin often begins in the Imagination, and therefore we must establish a strict Guard upon our roving Thoughts, and reduce them when they first begin to go astray. We must lay a strong Chain of Restraint upon those endless Wanderers; for our Saviour himself tells us, out of the

*Heart proceed Adulteries and Fornications, which defile the Man; Mat. xv. 19.*

We must make a self-denying *Covenant with our Eyes, that we mayn't look upon Temptation*, lest we be led astray from the Paths of Purity. Our blessed Lord himself gives us a sufficient Caution, when he explains the seventh Commandment: *Mat. v. 28. I say unto you, that whosoever looketh on a Woman to lust after her, hath committed Adultery with her already in his Heart.* When our Saviour forbids a wanton Look, he requires that we put a Vail upon our Eyes, lest like wandering Stars or foolish Fires they betray us into foul and miry Pits of Pollution, or lead us to deep and dangerous Precipices.

*Avoid all impure Representations, Pictures, and Images:* Turn your Eyes from immodest Sights, and your Ears from polluted Language, whether it be in Discourse, or Writing, a lewd Jest, or a wanton Song. Let them not entertain you, though they may be attended and adorned with never so many Colours of Wit, and Charms of Musick. *Romances, and Novels, and invented Stories of forbidden Love,* have painted over these Impurities with shining Eloquence, and awakened the same foolish Passions in the Reader. O how unhappily has the *Art of Verse*, which was first consecrated to the Service of the Temple, been prostituted to the vilest Purposes, to give gay Colours to Temptation, and gild over the foulest Images of Iniquity! And what a Multitude of Souls may date the Commencement of their Guilt and Ruin from the time when they began to frequent the poisonous Entertainments of the Stage! Their Ears which were shock'd at first with some of the coarse and foul Expressions of modern Comedy, by Degrees are hardned to bear the most offensive Language: Their Modesty and Blushing dies and vanishes by Degrees, till at last they learn to relish the grossest Pollutions of the Theatre, and perhaps put the Fable into Practice.

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As *Faith* and *Salvation* come by *hearing*, so *Iniquity* and *everlasting Death* come sometimes by *hearing* too. And what we would not hear, surely we should not speak. Let us then *set a Guard upon our Tongues*, lest they border upon forbidden Language. *No Filthiness, no foolish Talking, no corrupt Communication must proceed out of our Mouths*, Eph. iv. 29. and v. 4. We should not affect those Speeches of a *double meaning*, which lead the Thoughts away to lewd and wanton Conceits, and make foul Impressions upon the Mind. Let our Ears hate to be treated with such Indecencies, nor let our Lips dare to treat others so.

2. *Do not make too rich Provisions for the Feeding of the Flesh; indulge not your selves in the Delicacies of the Taste, nor in the Luxury of excessive Sleep*: Both of these may incline animal Nature to licentious Desires: Stand afar off from *Gluttony* and *Excess of Wine*, nor pamper the Body beyond the just Support, and due Refreshment of Nature. The holy Apostle in his Prohibitions couples *Chambering and Wantonness* with a *riotous and drunken Practice*, Rom. xiii. 13. and calls them all *Works of Darknes*. 'Tis a good Remark of *Kempis*, a devout Papist in former Days, *Bridle the Appetites of the Palate, get a Sovereignty over them, and you will be better able to master every other Appetite*.

3. *Always employ your selves in something innocent and useful, that may engage the Powers of the Body, or the Mind, or both, that so Temptation may never find you idle*. The Springs of the Sin of Sodom were *Fulness of Bread, and abundance of Idleness*; therefore they grew haughty, and committed Abomination before the Lord, Ezek. xvi. 49, 50. This is an Advice of *Jerom*, one of the Christian Fathers, *Be still doing some Work, that the Devil, when he comes to tempt, may always find thee busy*. Where you are in Danger of these Sins, put your selves upon a Necessity of Diligence all the Day, that you may have no Time nor Room for wild Imaginations nor impure Indulgences.

4. *Avoid*

4. *Avoid the Seasons, the Places, and the Objects of Temptation*, as far as is consistent with the necessary Duties of Life: For he that hath no Caution about him, and is not afraid of being tempted, he is not acquainted with human Weakness, nor is he so much afraid of Sin as he ought to be.

5. *Maintain an everlasting and awful Sense of the Presence of God thy Maker, thy Governor, and thy Judge.* Remember the Lord beholds the secret Workings of the Heart, and the foul Practices of Darkneſs and Midnight. There is not a Place where the Eye of God cannot come. What an honourable Character hath young *Joſeph* acquired in the Word of God, and his Name ſtands recorded with Renown in divine Hiſtory through all Ages, for his Flight from the Allurements of an immodest Woman: The Guard which he continually placed upon his Virtue, was the all-ſeeing Eye of Heaven. *How can I do this great Wickedneſs, and ſin againſt God?* Gen. xxxix. 9.

6. *Get thoſe Scriptures written in your Hearts, and ready at all Times in your Memories, which may be the moſt effectual Antidotes and Preservatives againſt all forbidden Pleaſure.* This was the ancient Practice of the Saints. *Pſal. cxix. 11. Thy Word have I bid in my Heart, that I might not ſin againſt thee. The Word of God is the Sword of the Spirit*, to put to flight, and to ſlay whole Armies of Iniquity.

7. *Fly daily to the Mercy-Seat for divine Aid: Commit thy Soul and Body to the keeping of Chriſt*; he is exalted and authorized to take care of Sinners, who make him their Refuge; he is alſo compaſſionate and ready to ſuccour the tempted. There is a cleaning Virtue in the Blood of *Chriſt* to waſh away the fouleſt Guilt, and to ſprinkle the Conſcience of the humble Penitent with Peace and Pardon: And there is all-ſufficient Power and Grace with him to ſubdue the moſt raging Vices. Make haſte to him by humble Faith, and moſt importunate Prayer: Continue



tinue instant at the Throne: Never rest till he hath by his Providence and his Grace deliverd you from the dangerous Temptation, or made you Conqueror over the Sin that easily besets you. There are a thousand Souls in Heaven, who were once conflicting here with the same impure Temptations, but they gained the Victory by the Blood and Spirit of *Christ*, and are made more than Conquerors through him who hath loved them.

I fear I have trespassed upon my Hearers, in dwelling thus long on this dangerous Theme. 'Tis time to retire, and end my Discourse. Those who have a Mind to be better furnished with Weapons and divine Armour against these Enemies of *Purity* and *Virtue*, I would recommend to them three Books, where they may find abundant Provision: And these are Mr. *Ostervald's* Treatise of *Uncleanness*, Mr. *Henry's* four Discourses against *Immorality*, and Mr. *Baxter's* *Christian Directory*, Tome 1. Chap. 8. Part 5. And may the holy and pure Spirit, who attended at the Baptism of our Saviour in the Form of a *Dove*, which is an Emblem of Chastity, may he give these Waters of the Sanctuary a divine Efficacy to purify the Souls of polluted Sinners, and to guard the Innocent and the Tempted from these dangerous Pollutions!





## SERMON XXVIII.

Christian Morality, viz. A Lovely  
Carriage, &c.

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PHILIP. iv. 8.

— *Whatsoever Things are Lovely, — think  
on these Things.*

Ὅσα προσφιλῆ, &c.

**M**A N was a lovely Creature in his first Formation and Innocence, however he has been debased and dishonoured by the Fall. Now there is nothing in all the *Religion of Christ* but what tends to restore *Man* to the Excellencies of his *original Estate*, or to exalt him above them, and to render him all over amiable. To this End *Truth* and *Sincerity* are recommended to him in the Gospel, with a *venerable Decency* in all his Conduct. To this End he is requir'd to practise *Justice* to his Neighbour, and to keep himself *pure* and *chaste* from all the Vices of Sensuality. Thus far we have proceeded in improving the Text. And the Man who has attained thus far, has many *lovely Qualities* belonging to him, such as lay a Foundation for a *good Report*, and deserve our Praises.

Yet there are many things in human Conversation, which do not directly fall under the Commands of  
*Truth*

*Truth and Gravity, Justice and Purity:* These the Apostle recommends to the *Philippians*, under the following Characters, *viz.* Things that are *Lovely*, that are of *good Report, Deeds of Virtue, and worthy of Praise.*

The Things that are *Lovely*, are such as look well among Men, and have a good Appearance in the Eyes of the World: Those Things that *gain the love of our Fellow-Creatures*: Not meerly such religious Practices, as make us beloved by Fellow-Christians, but such a Temper and Conduct as commands the Esteem and Respect even of the Ungodly, and those that profess not strict Religion. This ought to be the Carriage of the Saints of the Most High, they should practice those Things that are grateful and pleasing to human Nature, so far as Innocence allows; those Things that may recommend our Conversation to our Neighbours, and procure the Love of all Men.

Is it not a very desirable thing to have it said of any particular Christian, *All that know him love him; he hath no Enemies but those that are unacquainted with him*, unless it be such as hate him upon the same Ground as the Devil doth, and that is because of his Piety and Goodness?

But to explain this more fully, and impress it with more Power upon every one of our Consciences, I will descend to particular Instances of a *Lovely Carriage*. And here I shall mention but these few, *viz.* *Prudence, Moderation, Humility, Meekness, Patience, and Love.*

I. *Prudence is a lovely Quality.* This teaches us to speak every Word, and perform every Action of Life at a proper Time, in the proper Place, and toward the proper Person. 'Tis *Prudence* that distinguishes our various Behaviour toward our Fellow-Creatures, according to their different Ranks and Degrees among Mankind, or the different Relations  
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in which we stand to them. 'Tis a very desirable Excellency to know when 'tis proper to speak, and when 'tis best to keep silence; at what Seasons, and in what Company we should awaken our Zeal, and exert our active Powers; or when we should hide our selves, or put a Bridle upon our Lips, and sit still, and hear.

Prudence is of infinite Use in all the Affairs of Life and Religion: Nor is there any Hour of the Day, nor any Place wherein we spend that Hour, whether alone or in publick, but gives occasion for some Exercise of this Virtue. It does not belong to human Nature to possess this in Perfection: *Perfect Prudence dwells with God alone*, God the most lovely of Beings! He that comes nearest to it, is the wisest of Men, and he gains the Love and high Esteem of all that are near him; for his Conduct in Life is of singular Advantage to those that converse with him, as well as to himself. This Man is consulted by his Friends as an earthly Oracle, and by his Advice he saves many from Ruin. Thus he wins and wears their Honour and their Love.

There are *many good Qualities* both of the *natural* and *moral* kind that must meet together, to make up a prudent Man. He must be furnished with a *Memory of Things past*, and with *just and proper Observations* made upon them, that he may know how to improve every Opportunity and Occurrence of Life to the best Purposes, when the same Occasions return. There is no Prudence without some Degrees of *Experience*. But *Experience* alone is not sufficient, he should have also a *wide Extent of Soul*, and be able to take a large and comprehensive Survey of the concurrent Circumstances of things present: And he must be blessed with a *solid Judgment*, that by putting many things at once into the Balance, he may find which outweighs the rest, and determine his present Conduct thereby. He must have a *Degree of Sagacity*, to foresee future Events, according to



the usual Consequences of things in this mortal State. *The prudent Man foresees the Evil, and hideth himself, but the simple pass on, and are punished*, Prov. xxii. 3. that is, They suffer for their want of Prudence and Foresight. And besides all these, he should be a Man of firm and steady Resolution to go through Difficulties, and to put in practice what his Judgment has determined.

*Rashness and ungoverned Passion* are great Enemies of this Virtue. Both these push a Man onward to a hasty and irregular Conduct. His Lips multiply Folly, and his Hands practise it through the Impatience of his Spirit. His unguarded Talk, and precipitant Actions plunge himself into Snares, and sometimes involve his Acquaintance in the same Mischief.

There are other Characters also inconsistent with *Prudence*, such as an *unthinking and unsteady Temper*. The *thoughtless Person* lives at a venture, walks always at random, and seems to aim at nothing. He enjoys the present Hour indeed, talking and acting according to the meer Appearances of Things. He is content with a slight sudden View of any thing without Recollection or Forethought; and in a most literal sense *takes no thought for the Morrow*. The *fickle and unconstant Man*, he may aim at something indeed, and have honest Designs in his Head, but is ever changing the Means to attain them, and pursues nothing with that Steadiness that *Prudence* requires, or that the necessity of human Affairs demands of every Man that would be *wise and happy*. Such Men may be pitied as *weak and silly*, but they are seldom esteemed, or much beloved in the World, while *Prudence* is so much wanting.

There is no necessity that I should cite special Parts of the Word of God, to encourage us to seek this most amiable Quality, since the Recommendations of *true Wisdom*, both *human and divine*, are scattered up and down through all the sacred Writings: And the Spirit of God has given us one or two Books

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on purpose to teach us *Prudence*; these are the *Ecclesiastes* and the *Proverbs of Solomon*. Nor can I propose any better Direction to gain universal Wisdom, than to read the Book of *Proverbs* often with Diligence and humble Prayer.

II. *Moderation is another lovely Quality*. It teaches us to maintain a *Medium* between those wild Extremes, into which human Nature is ready to run upon every Occasion:

When a warm and imprudent Talker adorns some common Character with excessive Praises, and carries it up to the Stars; the *moderate Man* puts in a cautious Word, and thinks it is sufficient to raise it half so high. Or when he hears a vast and unreasonable load of Accusation and Infamy thrown upon some lesser Mistakes in Life, the *moderate Man* puts in a soft Word of Excuse, lightens the Burthen of Reproach, and relieves the good Name of the Sufferer from being pressed to Death. When he sees *Oppression* and *Violence* practised amongst his Neighbours, the *Justice* of his Soul directs him to take the Part of the *injured Person*, and his own *Moderation and Goodness* inclines him to do it in such a manner, as may calm and suppress the Resentment of the *Oppressed*, and soften and melt the *Oppressor* into Compliance with the Rules of Justice. Thus he reconciles them both, without giving Offence to either.

When any Sects of Christians seem to be carried away with the furious Torrent of some prevailing Notions, or some unnecessary Practices, some special Superstition, or a contentious Spirit, the *moderate Man* tries to shew how much of Truth and Goodness may be found amongst each Party, where all agree to hold *Christ Jesus* the Head; though he dares not renounce a Grain of *Truth* or *necessary Duty*, for the sake of Peace, and he would contend earnestly, where Providence calls him, for the essential Articles of Faith which were once delivered to the Saints; for he knows

knows the *Wisdom that is from above is first pure, and then peaceable*, Jam. iii. 17. Yet he takes this Occasion to prove that some Truths or some Practices, are Articles of less Importance to the Christian Life; that they are not worthy of such *unchristian Quarrels*; and thus he attempts, as far as possible, to reconcile the angry Disputers. Sometimes he has the Happiness to shew them both that they fight in the dark; he explains their Opinions and their Contests, and puts the best Sense upon both of them: And when he has brought them into the Light, he makes it appear that they are *Friends* and *Brethren*; and that Religion and the Gospel are safe on both sides, if they would but dwell together without fighting, but that it is sorely endangered by their Battles. So St. Paul dealt with the *Jewish* and *Gentile Christians*, and assured them that they both belonged to the Kingdom of God, and the Church of *Christ*, though they quarrelled about *Flesh*, and *Herbs*, and *Holy-days*. How lovely, how glorious, how desirable is such a Character as this!

I confess when a *Party-Spirit* runs high among the different Sects of Religion, or the different Divisions of Mankind, this most amiable Virtue is called by the scandalous Names of *Indifferency*, and *Lukewarmness*, and *Trimming*; and it sustains a World of Reproaches from both the quarrelling Parties. *Moderation*, though it is the blessed Principle, which awakens and assists Men to become *Peace-makers*, yet at the same time when it enters into the Battle to divide the Contenders, it receives an unkind Stroke from either Side. This the Reconciler expects, and he bears it for the sake of Union and Love.

The *moderate Man* in Cases of private Property or Interest, does not insist upon the utmost of his own Right with a stiff and unyielding Obstinacy, but abates of his just Pretensions for the sake of Peace; and what he practises himself, he persuades others to practise in the like Contests. This is that *Moderation*

tion and Gentleness, which the great Apostle recommends a few Verses before my Text, *Phil. iv. 5. Let your Moderation be known to all Men.* And our blessed Lord himself gives the *moderate Man* this illustrious Encomium, *Blessed are the Meek, who submit rather than quarrel, for they shall inherit the Earth. Blessed are the Peacemakers, for they shall be called the Sons of God, Matt. v. 5. 9.* Happy Souls, whom the God of Truth, and the God of Peace, acknowledges for his Children, and to whom he promises a large Inheritance!

And let it be observed also, that whatsoever hard Usage the Sons of Peace may meet with, while the ferment of Parties is hottest, and the Storm is high, yet when the Clamour and Rage are sunk and calm, when the Party-fury hath spent itself, and is grown cool enough to suffer Men to bethink themselves, and to see all things in their true Colours, then the *Man of Moderation* stands approved of Men as well as of God; the divine Virtue appears in its own lovely Form, and receives a becoming Share of Honour.

III. *Humility is a lovely Virtue.* It is beautiful and becoming for a Man to divest himself of all affected Grandeur, and not to exalt his Head above his Neighbour. O that we were all *clothed with Humility!* It is an Ornament that becomes Sinners well. Let us put it on with our daily Raiment, and strive to vie with each other which shall practice this Grace in the greatest Perfection.

How unlovely a Carriage is it to boast ourselves of any superior Quality we possess, or to assume lofty Airs, because we *have more Money* than our Neighbour! to aggrandize ourselves in our own Esteem, in our own Language, in our Behaviour, because we fancy ourselves to be *better dressed, or better fed*, than our Fellow-Creatures! And if we have a little Honour put upon us by the Providence of God, it is a criminal Vanity for us to grow haughty and insolent upon



upon that Account. I am in pain whensoever I hear a Man treat his *Servant* as he doth his *Dog*; as though a poor Man were not made of the same Clay, nor born of the same ancient Race as his Master: As tho' *Adam* (whose Name is *Dust*) was not our common Father, or a Lord had not the same Original as other Men.

Nay, the nobler Possessions of the Mind, Ingenuity and Learning, and even *Grace* itself, are no sufficient Ground for Pride. It is a comely thing to see a Man exalted by many divine Gifts, and yet abasing himself. It is a lovely Sight to behold a Person well adorned with Virtue and Merit, and glorified in the Mouths of all Men, and yet concealing himself: To see a Man of shining Worth drawing, as it were, a Curtain before himself, that the World might not see him, while the World do what they can to do him Justice, and draw aside the Veil to make his Merit visible. Not that a Man of Worth is always bound to practise Concealment; this would be to rob Mankind of the Blessing God has designed for them, and to *wrap up his Talents in the unprofitable Napkin*. But there are Occasions wherein a worthy and illustrious Person may be equally useful to the World, and yet withdraw himself from publick Applause. This is the Hour to make his Humility appear.

How graceful and engaging is it in *Persons of Title and Quality*, to stoop to those that are of mean Degree, to converse freely at proper Seasons with those that are poor and despicable in the World, to give them leave to offer their humble Requests, or sometimes to debate a Point of Importance with them? Not all the dignity of their Raiment can render them half so honourable as this Condescension does; for nothing makes them so much like God. *The High and Holy One who inhabits Eternity*, stoops down from Heaven to visit the Afflicted, and to dwell with the Poor. And surely, when we set ourselves before

the divine Majesty, we are meaner and more contemptible in his Eyes, than it is possible for any Fellow-Creature to be in ours; *he humbles himself to behold Princes.*

It must be allowed indeed, that where God and the World have placed any Person in a superior Station, and given him a sensible Advancement above his Fellow-Creatures, he is not bound to renounce the Honours that are his Due, nor to act beneath the Dignity of his Character and State. This would be to confound all the beautiful Order of Things in the natural, civil, and religious Life. But there are Cases and Seasons that often occur, when *great Degrees of Humility* may be practised without danger of sinking one's own Character, or doing a Dishonour to our Station in the World. There is an Art of *maintaining State with an Air of Modesty*, nor is there any need to put on haughty and scornful Airs, in order to secure the Honours of a Tribunal, or the highest Offices of Magistracy. I have known a Man who acted in an exalted Station with so much Condescension and Candor, that all Men agreed to love and honour him so far, that it was hard to say, whether he was most honoured, or most beloved.

How amiable a Behaviour is it in *younger Persons*, when *Respect is paid to Age*, and the Honour is given to the hoary Head that Nature and Scripture join to require! *Lev. xix. 32. Thou shalt rise up before the hoary Head, and honour the Face of the old Man, and fear thy God: I am the Lord.* Though the Character of the aged Person, in respect of *Riches, Quality, and Learning*, may be much inferior, yet the *Wisdom* that is naturally supposed to be derived from long *Experience*, lays a Foundation for this superior Honour. And I look upon it as part of the Shame and just Reproach of our Day, that there is such a licentious Insolence assum'd by Youth to treat their Elders with Contempt. But so much the more lovely is the Carriage of those who, in spite of evil Custom,  
treat

treat old Age with Reverence, and abhor the *pert and petulant Indignities* that some of their Companions cast upon the Writings and Counsels of their Ancestors.

And here I beg leave also humbly to *admonish my Fathers*, that they practise the *lovely Grace of Condescension*, when they converse with those that are young. I entreat them to permit a Youth of an *inquisitive Genius*, to propose an Argument for some farther Improvement of Knowledge, or to raise an Objection against an establish'd Doctrine, and not to answer him with an imperious Frown, or with the Reproaches of *Heresy or Impertinence*. I beseech them to indulge the rising Generation in some Degrees of Freedom of Sentiment, and to offer some Demonstration for their own Opinions, besides their Authority, and the Multitude of their Years.

The Apostle *Peter's* Advice may be address'd to Persons of all Ages and Characters; *1. Pet. v. 5. Ye Younger, submit your selves to the Elder: Yea, all of you be subject to one another, and be clothed with Humility; for God resisteth the Proud, and giveth Grace to the Humble.*

If we have *more Knowledge* than others, how *lovely* is our Conduct, when we teach and instruct them, not like *Sovereigns of their Faith*, and *Dictators to their Understanding*, but in a way of friendly Conversation, and mutual Improvement? If any thing occurs to be debated, it is a Sign of Modesty to yield to the Force of Argument, and not resolve before-hand to be *infallible and obstinate*, as tho' we were exempted from the common frailty of human Nature, and free from all possibility of Mistake.

While we are arguing with others, in order to convince them, how graceful a thing is it, when we have the Power of the Argument on our own side, to keep ourselves from *Insult and Triumph*! How engaging a Behaviour toward our Opponent, when we seem to part as tho' we were equal in the De-

bate, while 'tis evident to all the Company, that the Truth lies wholly on our Side !

Yet I will own there are Seasons, when the *obstinate* and the *assuming Disputant* should be made to feel the Force of an Argument, by displaying it in its victorious and triumphant Colours : But this is seldom to be practised, so as to insult the opposite Party, except in Cases where they have shewn a haughty and insufferable Insolence. Some Persons perhaps can hardly be taught Humility without being severely humbled ; and yet where there is need of this Chastisement, I had rather any other hand should be employed in it than mine.

IV. *Meekness is another of the lovely Graces.* This is contrary to *Wrath* and *Malice*, and all the angry Passions, as *Humility* stands in Opposition to *Pride*. As there are generally some secret Workings of *Pride* in the Heart, when a Man gives Indulgence to his *wrathful Passions* ; so where a Person has thoroughly learnt the Practice of *Humility*, the Grace of *Meekness* is easily attain'd, and indeed it seems to be a necessary Consequent of it.

How lovely is the Character of a Man, who can hear himself censured and reviled, without reviling again ! Who can sustain repeated Affronts, without kindling into Flame and Fury ! Who has learnt to bear Injuries from his Fellow-Creatures, and yet withhold himself from meditating Revenge ! He can sit and hear a strong Opposition made to his Sentiments, without conceiving an Affront : He can bear to be contradicted without resenting : And as he never loves to *give Offence* to any Man, so neither is he *presently offended*. 'Tis only the more peevish and feeble Pieces of human Nature, that are ready to take offence at Trifles, and many times they make their own *foolish Jealousies* a sufficient Ground for their Indignation.



We cannot expect to pass through the World, and find every thing peaceful and pleasant in it. All Men won't be of our Mind, nor agree to promote our Interest. There are Savages in this Wilderness, which lies in our way to the heavenly *Canaan*; and we must sometimes hear them roar against us. *Divine Courage* will enable us to walk onward without fear, and *Meekness* will teach us to pass by without resenting. We should learn to feel many a Spark of angry Fire falling upon us from the Tongues of others, and yet our Hearts should not be like Tinder ready to catch the Flame, and to return the Blaze. The meek Christian, at such a Season, possesses his Soul in *Patience*, as good *David* did, when *Shimei* sent his Malice and his Curses after him: The Saint at that time was in an humble Temper, and said, *Let Shimei curse*. We should not *render Evil for Evil*, but according to the sacred Direction of Scripture, endeavour to *overcome Evil with Good*; Rom. xii. 21.

*Anger* is not utterly forbidden to the Christian; yet happy is he that has the least Occasion for it. In *Ephes. iv. 26*, the Apostle gives us this Rule, *Be ye angry, and sin not*. As if he would have said, when the Affairs of Life seem to require a just Resentment and Anger, look upon it as a dangerous Moment, and watch against a sinful Excess. Let us never give a wild Loose to our Wrath, but always hold the Reins of Government with a strong Hand, lest it break out into forbidden Mischief. When we give our selves leave to be offended, let the Anger appear to be directed against the Sin of the Offender, if possible, more than against his Person.

Let our *Anger* be *well-timed*, both as to the Season and the Length of it. The Seasons of it should be very uncommon; a Christian should seldom awaken his Anger, and the Continuance of it must be very short. *Let not the Sun go down upon your Wrath, nor give place to the Devil*. The long sullen Resentment which is practised by some Persons, carried on from

Day to Day with a gloomy Silence, and now and then venting itself in a spiteful Word, or a sly Reproach, is by no means becoming the Name and Spirit of a Christian. This is *giving place to the Devil*, and making room for him to lodge in our Hearts. This is as much contrary to *Meekness*, as a *short and sudden Fury* is, and perhaps carries in it a Guilt more aggravated in the sight of God.

Yet neither should our Anger indulge itself in *loud and noisy Practices*, nor fill the House with a *brawling Sound*. 'Tis better to dwell in a Corner of the House-top, than to cohabit in a Palace with such a *brawling Companion of Life*; *Prov. xxi. 9.* And the wise Man has repeated it again in the 25th Chapter, as a Matter worthy of double notice. *St. Paul* forbids this Practice to the *Ephestians*; *Let all Bitterness, and Wrath, and Anger, and Clamour, and Evil-speaking, be put away from you, with all Malice*; *Ephes. iv. 31.*

Nor should our Resentments carry us to any *cruel Practices*. The Word of God spend its Curses upon such sort of Anger, *Gen. xlix. 7.* *Cursed be the Wrath of Simeon, for it was fierce, and the Anger of Levi, for it was cruel.* You know what Mischiefs it hurried them into, even to foul Treachery and Murder, and the Destruction of a whole Country. The Grace of *Meekness* is an Enemy to all these Practices, and a happy Preservative from them.

V. *Patience is a lovely Virtue.* I am not now speaking of that religious Exercise of it, which consists in an humble Submission to the Providences of God, without repining at his Hand, or sending up our Murmurs against Heaven; but a *patient Conduct to our Fellow-Creatures*, is the thing which I chiefly design here to recommend.

When some Persons stand in need of any of the Necessaries or Conveniencies of Life, they must be supply'd first, they can brook no Delay; let all the  
World

World stand by waiting till they are served; and their Anger is quickly kindled if their Affairs are not dispatch'd in a Moment. They make no Allowance for the Necessities or Conveniencies of others; nor for the various Accidents that attend human Life, which may stop the Speed of the most diligent Servant, and constrain him unwillingly to delay his Message or his Work. But the *patient Christian* considers all things; desires but his Share of the Attendance of his Fellow-Creatures, and waits without Clamour till the proper Season. He makes wise and kind Allowances for every Incident of Life that may give just Occasion to a Delay, and gains the Love of all that are about him by his most engaging Carriage.

How lovely is it to see a *Teacher waiting upon those that are slow of Understanding*, and taking due Time and Pains to make the Learner conceive what he means, without upbraiding him with his Weakness, or reproaching him with the Names of *stupid* and *senseless*? This is to imitate God, the God of Long-suffering and Patience, *Who giveth Wisdom to all that ask, and upbraideth not*, James i. 5. The patient Man attends and waits upon those that are slow of Speech, and hears an Argument fully proposed before he makes his Reply. This is an honourable and lovely Character; *But he that answereth a Matter before he beareth it, it is Folly and Shame unto him*, Prov. xviii. 13. Perhaps he is utterly mistaken in the Objection which his Friend was going to make, then he is justly-put to the Blush for his Folly and Impatience.

The Virtue of *Patience* teaches us to be calm and easy toward our Fellow-Creatures, while we sustain sharp and continued Afflictions from the Hand of God. 'Tis the unhappy Conduct of some Christians, that when the great God puts them under any sore Trial or Chastisement, they are angry with all their Friends around them, and scatter abroad their Dis-

contents

contents in the Family, and many times make them fall heaviest upon their most intimate Friends. If one were to search this Matter to the Bottom, we should find the Spring of it is an *Impatience at the sovereign Hand of God*; but because their Christianity forbids them to vent their Uneasiness at Heaven, they divert the Stream of their Resentment, and make their Fellow-Creatures feel it: So a Piece of unripe Fruit press'd with a heavy Weight from above, scatters its sour Juice on every thing that stands near it, and gives a just Emblem of the *impatient Christian*.

But what a lovely Sight is it to behold a Person burthened with many Sorrows, and perhaps his *Flesh upon him has Pain* and Anguish, while *his Soul mourns within him*; yet his Passions are calm, he possesses his Spirit in Patience, he takes kindly all the Relief that his Friends attempt to afford him, nor does he give them any Grief or Uneasiness but what they feel through the Force of meer Sympathy and Compassion? Thus even in the midst of Calamities, he knits the Hearts of his Friends faster to himself, and lays greater Obligations upon their Love by so lovingly and divine a Conduct under the Weight of his heavy Sorrows.

VI. *Love to Mankind in the various Branches of it, is a most lovely Quality, and well becomes a Christian.*

Should I speak of *Love in the Heart*, which ever thinks the best concerning others, and wishes and seeks their Welfare and Happiness: Should I speak of it as it works on the Tongue, and appears in all friendly Language, whether the Object be present or afar off: Should I describe it as it discovers it self in the *Hand of Assistance and Bounty*, to relieve the Poor and the Helpless: Each of these would yield sufficient Matter for a whole Discourse; and this Grace would appear lovely in all its Forms. It is a Pain to my Thoughts to omit it here: Methinks I can



can hardly tell how to let it go without large Encomiums: Nor could I prevail with my self to pass it over now with so brief a Mention, if I did not design to employ an Hour or two on this Subject hereafter.

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*The second Part of the Twenty Eighth*  
S E R M O N.

I Proceed to shew how the very *Light of Nature* recommends every agreeable and obliging Character; every lovely Quality that is found among Mankind; and Reason exhorts us to the Acquirement and Practice of it.

I. *Our own Interest directs us to it. 'Tis a natural good Quality, and a most useful thing to desire the Love of others, to seek the Favour of our Fellow-Creatures. 'Tis a very lawful Ambition to covet the Good-will of those with whom we converse; and to pursue such Practices as may procure us a Place in their good Opinion and Friendship. We who are born for Society, must naturally desire to stand well with Mankind; and that our Neighbours should wish our Welfare, should treat us with Decency, and Civility, and Love; should assist our Interest, and do us good when we stand in need of them: And if so, then the Rule of Justice obliges us to practise the same towards them which we desire they should practise towards us. The more we exercise of Humility, Meekness, Patience, Charity, and Good-will towards our Neighbours, the more Reason have we to expect the same Returns of a lovely Carriage from them. And it is no small Advantage in Life, for a Person to be much beloved. When he falls under*  
sudden

sudden Distresses, every Man is ready to relieve him; when he meets with perplexing Difficulties, he has the ready Assistance of Multitudes at his Command, because he hath many Lovers.

II. It is a most generous Character, and the Sign of a great and good Soul, to delight to please those with whom we converse. 'Tis a lovely Sight to behold a Person solicitous to make all round about him easy and happy. Such amiable Souls as these, 'tis a frequent Practice, and a Pleasure to them, to contradict their own natural Inclinations, in order to serve the Desires, or the Interest of their Friends. A happy Temper! that finds so much Satisfaction in this *Self-denial*, that the very Virtue loses its Name, and it becomes but another sort of *Self-pleasing*. Such Persons are in pain, when they find their Friends hard to be pleased, and they suffer sometimes too much Uneasiness in themselves, because of the *perverse Humours* of those they converse with. This Uneasiness indeed may arise to a criminal Excess, but the Spring of it has something amiable.

I could wish every Soul of us would learn a lovely Carriage. For,

III. It makes us resemble God himself. And yet there are some that will be *selfish* and *churlish*, that will practise the *furious* or the *peevish* Passions, through some reigning Principle of *Pride*, or *Covetousness*, *Impatience*, or *Envy*. There are some that delight in vexing their Fellow-Creatures, and in giving them Torment and Pain.

Part of these Qualities make us a-kin to *Brutes of the worse kind*, when we take care of none but *Self*, and are regardless of our Neighbour's Welfare. "If  
" *Self* be healthy and rich, easy and honoured, 'tis  
" no matter though the rest of the World sustain  
" *Sickness*, and *Poverty*, and *Scandal*." Others of these unlovely Characters approach nearer to the  
Spirit

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Spirit of the *Devil*, who takes delight in torturing his Fellow-Creatures, and doing what Mischief he can amongst them.

But 'tis a *God-like Temper* to take a sweet Satisfaction in diffusing our Goodness, and in pleasing and serving all that are near us. *Let us then be Followers of God as dear Children.* He is the original Beauty, he is the loveliest and the best of Beings. *To be good, and to do good*, is a divine Perfection, and let us remember 'tis a Perfection that may be imitated too. *He causes his Sun to rise, and his Rain to fall on the Just and the Unjust, and fills the Hearts even of the Evil as well as the Good with Food and Gladness*, when he gives them fruitful Seasons. Let us not dare then to be rough, and quarrellsome, and sullen, and ill-natur'd, while we profess to be his Off-spring. Let there be something lovely in our whole Temper and Conduct, while we pretend to be Imitators of the God of Love.

And does the *Light of Nature* furnish us with all these Motives for a lovely Carriage? then surely the *Light of Scripture enforces them all.* The Gospel obliges Christians to this Practice by much stronger Arguments, and it lays on us more substantial Obligations.

I. *The blessed and ever glorious Trinity*, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, give us in the Gospel a divine Example of this Practice.

Has God, the great and glorious God, manifested a lovely Conduct in his Works of Creation, and his Ways of Providence; how much more glorious a Pattern has he set us in the Transactions of his redeeming Love! What Condescension hath he here shewn! What Gentleness! what Patience and Forbearance! what Forgiveness! what infinite and endless Discoveries of Grace has he made in his Gospel!

God

God the Father reconciling the World to himself, by Jesus Christ, has a peculiar Sweetness of Aspect, and most amiable Appearance. Here every Christian beholds him such as he reveal'd himself to Moses, when he caus'd his Glory to pass before him, *Exod. xxxiv. 6. The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in Goodness and Truth, &c. The Son of God stooping down to take Flesh and Blood upon him; made the most amiable Figure in the Universe. Even in his glorious and triumphant State in Heaven, he is represented by a Lamb that was slain, an Emblem of Meekness and Innocence. And if ever the blessed Spirit appeared in the Shape of any living Creature, 'twas in the Form of a Dove, a lovely and gentle Animal. Thus the blessed Trinity conspire to teach us this amiable and divine Carriage.*

II. *The Son of God incarnate has brought a lovely Pattern of this Practice nearer to us in his whole Deportment on Earth. I cannot part with the most graceful Example of our Lord Jesus Christ with a slight Notice. He came into this World partly with a Design to become our Pattern in every Virtue, and in every Grace. Let us turn our Eyes towards him in all the Circumstances and Behaviours of Life, and he will ever appear, as he is in himself, the chiefest of ten Thousands, and altogether lovely. Let us take a Survey of him under those several Particulars, in which an amiable Carriage has been described.*

*Is Prudence a lovely Virtue? How perfectly wise was the Conduct of our Lord! How carefully did he attend to the Circumstances of Time and Place, while he dwelt among Mankind! How happily did he suit his Conversation to his Company! How wisely did he derive his divine Discourses from the daily Occurrences of Life! How admirably did he distribute his Benefits according to the various Necessities of Men! So that the unprejudiced World pronounced concerning him, He has done all things well.*

Shall



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Shall we be rash and foolish, fickle and imprudent, and live at random in our Words and our Works, when we have so divine a Pattern of Prudence before us in the History of the Gospel?

Is *Moderation* another lovely Character, and a *Peace-maker* an amiable Title? Such was our blessed Lord, and such should his Followers be. How glorious a Sight is it to behold the *Son of God* coming down from Heaven to be a Mediator betwixt his offended Father and his offending Creatures! to reconcile Heaven and Earth together, and rather than fail in this Attempt, he gladly exposed himself to Shame and Death, and made a Cement of everlasting Friendship betwixt God and Man with his own Blood. Shall we, who are reconciled by such amazing Transactions, quarrel with each other for Trifles, and form our selves into Parties for Rage, and Strife, and Hatred, and yet profess the Name of the great Reconciler! Are we not commanded to *follow Peace with all Men, as far as possible*, with the Security of our Holiness and Peace with God? And how can we otherwise hope to be the Subjects and Favourites of the *Prince of Peace*?

Is *Humility* another Part of an amiable Character? Who was ever humble as the Son of God? *The Brightness of his Father's Glory, and the express Image of his Person, who emptied himself, and took upon him the Form of a Servant, and was made in the Likeness of Men, and humbled himself yet lower, even to the Death of the Cross, and to the Dust of the Grave. Therefore the Father loved him, and the Father exalted him.* This is the Man, the God-man, who calls us to the Practice of this Virtue; *Learn of me*, says he, *for I am meek and lowly, and ye shall find rest for your Souls*, Mat. xi. 29. What Folly and Madness is it for Dust and Ashes to be proud, when God's own Son was humble? And he gives us a noble Instance to assure us that *Humility* is a lovely Quality: When the rich young Man in the Gospel came, and kneel-

ed

ed before him to ask his Advice, *Jesus looked upon him, and loved him*; and would have left it upon Record in his Word, that there was something *lovely* in a modest and humble Carriage, even where the saving Grace of God was wanting. *Mark x. 21.*

*Meekness and Patience* are the next things I mentioned, that go to make up the Character of a *lovely* Person. But who was *meek* as the Son of God is? What affronts did he endure even while he was inviting Sinners in the most affecting Language to their own eternal Happiness? What shameful Mockery did he sustain? What Loads of malicious and infamous Blasphemy? But *when he was reviled, he reviled not again; as a Sheep before the Shearer is dumb, so opened he not his Mouth.* O when shall we learn to imitate our blessed Lord, and forbear and forgive as he did.

How was his *Patience* tried to the utmost! And that not only in the fruitless and thankless Labours of his Life among a cruel and insolent Race of Men, but in the Approaches of his bloody Death. When the blessed Redeemer lay agonizing in the Garden, or hung bleeding on the Cross, to see him oppressed with the Weight of the Wrath of God due to our Sins, conflicting with the Rage of Devils, forsaken by his Friends, and surrounded with the profane Insults of barbarous Men: What a mournful and moving Spectacle! And yet there is something divinely amiable in it, to behold him all over calm and patient, and meditating immortal and forgiving Love. What unworthy Followers are we of the blessed *Jesus, the Lamb that was slain*, when upon every Occasion we take fire, and break out into an impatient Fury?

But if I should enter upon the *last Instance* of a *lovely Character*, and begin the mention of *Love*, how far beyond all Example, and beyond all Description, is the Love of our Lord *Jesus*! How tender were the Compassions of his Heart! How extensive the Benevolence of his Soul! What melting  
Language

Language of Love dropt from his Lips hourly ! And how were his mortal and immortal Powers employed in procuring infinite Blessings for sinful Men, in distributing them amongst the Rebellious ! O that we could learn to think, and speak, and act like our blessed Saviour, whose Life and whose Death was a rich and various Scene of divine and human Love !

III. I might draw further Arguments from the *Examples, and from the Writings of the Apostles and holy Men in the primitive Days of Christianity* ; when they were all of one Heart and one Soul, and did every thing to please and serve their Fellow-Christians. I would mention the Epistles of St. *John* ; what a divine Spirit of Love breathes in them ! But next to our Lord *Jesus*, I should rather turn your Eyes and Thoughts to the Temper and Conduct of St. *Paul*, the greatest of the Apostles, and the nearest to *Christ*. How did he please all Men, not seeking his own Profit, but their Salvation, even as *Christ* pleased not himself ? And he leaves us his own Example in subordination to his Lord, *Be ye Followers of me, even as I also am of Christ*, and give none Offence either to Jew or Gentile, Rom. xv. 1, 2. 3. 1 Cor. x. 32, &c. Who is there sorrowful among you, and I sympathize not ? *Who is weak, and I am not weak ? Who is offended, and I don't share in the Pain ?* I bear and endure all things for the *Elect's* sake, that they may be saved, 2 Cor. xi. 29. 2 Tim. ii. 10. How lovely was his Behaviour in all Respects ! His Epistles are full of it, it shines through every Page : His Character demands a Volume to describe it, all worthy of our Imitation and our Wonder.

But I must hasten to the last Motive derived from Christianity, and that is *the Nature and Design of the Gospel it self*. 'Tis the most lovely of all Religions. *Wisdom, Humility, Peace, Patience, Meekness, Moderation, and Love*, run through every Part of the Covenant of Grace, like so many bright and beauti-

ful Colours join'd together in the Rainbow, that stretches its Glory round the lower Sky, and seals an ancient and everlasting Peace between Earth and Heaven.

There is therefore the most sovereign and constraining Obligation laid upon us *Christians*, to do all Things that are *lovely*, that we may make our holy Religion appear like itself, and cause Christianity to be beloved of Men. Every *Christian* is in some Degree intrusted with the *Honour of Christ*, and with the Credit and Renown of his Gospel. Let us be watchful then to take all Opportunities, and use all pious Methods to make our *Hope* appear glorious, to set the Name of *Christ* in its own amiable Light, and to *adorn the Doctrine of God our Saviour*.

How dishonourable and shameful a thing is it for a Christian to have an unlovely Carriage, or to shew any thing in his Conduct that is rough and forbidding! What a Blemish does it cast upon the Gospel which he professes! Let us talk what we will of the sublimer Glories of *Christianity*, and profess an Acquaintance with the deepest Mysteries, yet with all our flaming Zeal for the Faith, we may become Scandals to the Gospel, if we abandon the Practices of Love. The World will judge of our Religion by our Temper and Carriage. We give Occasion therefore to the World to upbraid us, *What do you more than others?* If we, who pretend to be *Christians*, who have professed the most lovely of all Religions, are guilty of Practices unworthy of that sacred Name: When they see our Carriage as bad as others, they will be ready to cry out, *What is your beloved more than another beloved?* What are your Doctrines better than others, if your Practice differs not from others! And are you willing it should be said of you, that you are the Occasions of Shame and Scandal to the Name and Religion of *Christ*?

We should do all things that are amiable in the Sight of Men, that the Gospel may have the Glory  
of



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of it: Shall I say, *The Gospel of Christ deserves it at our Hands?* If the Gospel brings so rich a Salvation to us, 'tis fitting we should bring a great deal of Honour to it. How honourable is it to the Gospel of *Christ*, when Persons of a rough, crabbed, sour Temper, are converted by this Gospel, are become Christians indeed, and are made all over amiable, and soft, and obliging in their Deportments; when they carry it like new Creatures, like Persons that are changed indeed, that have much of the Spirit of Love in them, the Temper of the Gospel, and the Temper of Heaven! 'Tis this Gospel, as I have said before, that turns Lions into Lambs, and Ravens into Doves, the most savage Creatures into mild and gentle.

While we are thus engaged in the *Practice of Love*, we have no need to abandon our *Zeal for the Truth*; but we should separate our divine Zeal from all our own guilty Passions, lest instead of honouring God, we should destroy his Children. The *Servant of the Lord may be bold and stedfast in the Defence of the Gospel*, but *he must be gentle towards all Men, ready to teach*, and patient under Injuries. *He must not strive like a Hero for Victory, but when any oppose themselves to the Truth, he must instruct them in Meekness*, 2 Tim. ii. 24. While we are *peaceful and harmless*, we may be at the same time *prudent and wise*; our Lord *Jesus* has joined these two Characters, Matt. x. 16. And it is a very lovely Inscription for a Disciple of *Christ* to wear in all his publick and private Conversation, *Wise as Serpents, and harmless as Doves*. Thus we may guard our selves from the Malice of the World, while we attempt to win them by all the sacred Methods of Humanity and divine Goodness.



## SERMON XXIX.

Christian Morality, viz. Things of  
good Report, &c.

PHILIP. iv. 8.

—*Whatsoever Things are of good Report—  
think on these Things.*

*Ὅσα ἐπιμα, &c.*

**T**HE Value of a *good Name* was so great under the *Jewish Dispensation*, that the Spirit of God does not think it beneath his Care to recommend it to his own chosen People, by the Mouth of *Solomon*, the wisest of Men: *'Tis better, and more worth, than precious Ointment*, Eccl. vii. 1. 'Twas counted an Ornament and Entertainment at publick Feasts, to have rich Oils poured upon the Head; the Price of some of them was exceeding great; they gave Refreshment to the natural Spirits, and spread a Perfume through all the Company. But a *good Name* is of greater Price, 'tis a rich Ornament to the Character of him that possesses it, and has considerable Influence toward his Happiness; so that to use the Words of *Solomon* again, *Prov. xxii. 1.* *'Tis rather to be chosen than great Riches.*

The blessed Apostle of the *Gentiles* is of the same Mind, and he recommends to the *Christian World*, the Practice of those *Things that are of good Report*, which is the way, whereby a *good Name* is to be obtained. He had just before recommended to us the *Things that are lovely* in the Eyes of Men, and such as will render us *well beloved* among our Neighbours. Now he invites us to the Practice of those *Things that are of good Report* in the World, such as will procure us Reputation and a good Name, where we may live, especially among the wise and sober Part of Mankind. This hath some Difference in it from the former, though it must be granted, that all things that are *lovely*, have also a Tendency to obtain a *good Name*.

There are many things in the Conduct of Life, which do not so directly offer themselves to us, as *Parts of necessary Justice, Piety, or Goodness*. But yet they are such as *bear a good Character* in the World, and they give to the Man that practices them, a *good Reputation* among his Fellow-Creatures: On the contrary, there are several other Practices, which is not easy to prove directly sinful, yet they are of *ill Report*, and they ought not to be indulged among Christians. Among these Practices of good Report, some are *changeable with the Times and Customs* of the Country, and they obtain a different Character and Esteem, according to the Age and Place wherein we dwell; others *always and in all Places* among sober and wise Men, obtain the same Character; they have been in all Ages, and in all Nations, esteemed things of good Report: The Nature of them seems to be *unchangeable*: And 'tis this sort of Actions only that I shall take notice of. By various Particulars, this Head will be better illustrated and improved, than it can be by any general Descriptions.

It is a Matter of good Report to *mind our own Business*, yet to be of a *publick Spirit*, to be *regular in our Conduct*, to keep the best Company, to abstain from the

utmost bounds of things lawful, and in doubtful Matters, to follow the Practices of the wisest and the best. As I discourse upon each of these Particulars, I shall observe what are those opposite Practices of evil Report, which we ought to avoid.

I. *It is a thing of good Report to mind our own Business*: The holy Apostle requires it, 1 Thess. iii. 11. *That ye study to be quiet, and to do your own Business.* One would think there should be no need of Study and Application in order to be quiet; but some Persons are of so turbulent and restless a Temper, that they naturally intermeddle with every thing: They had need take pains with themselves to keep themselves quiet, and busy only in their proper Work. The Word in the Greek φιλομνησθαι signifies that we should be ambitious of Quietness and Diligence in our Calling, for it is a Matter of Honour and Credit. In whatsoever Station we are placed, 'tis Industry must gain Reputation. There are other great and valuable Advantages of it, but I confine my self now to this one, that it is a thing of good Report among Men.

If Persons are called to Magistracy, let them attend to the Work of their superior Post. Let them rule and govern with all Diligence, and fulfil that Office well, with which God has intrusted them. Let them employ themselves much in their proper Sphere, and not wear the honourable Title in Idleness, or bear the Sword in vain, which hath been too frequent a Practice in this great City, and thereby Vice has grown rampant, and Reformation of Manners hath been shamefully discouraged.

Those who are made Ministers of the Gospel, let them make it their Business to win Souls to Salvation, to bring in Sinners to Faith and Holiness, and to edify the Saints by their Exhortations, by their Doctrine, by their Example. We should be instant in Season, and out of Season, reprove, rebuke, and exhort with all Long-suffering and Doctrine. Let him that ministers,



*ministers, wait on his Ministry: He that teacheth, on Teaching; he that exhorteth, on Exhortation; Rom. xii. 7. 2 Tim. iv. 2.* Let us not waste our Time and our best Talents in the Pursuit of laborious Trifles, in intricate and perplexing Controversies, which are less necessary to the Life of Christianity, or on useless and angry Squabbles, which divide and tear the Church. Nor let us throw away those Thoughts and Hours, on pompous Ornaments of Learning, on critical or polite Studies, or curious and artificial Works, which should be devoted to Matters of more sacred Importance.

If we are engaged in *Trades, Manufactures, or Merchandizes in the World*, let us shew all Industry, and honest Labour and Care, and thus walk with God, *every Man in his calling wherein he is called*, till the Providence of God evidently lead him to other Work, *1 Cor. vii. 24.* And thus we may refute the Calumnies of those who would seek all Occasions to reflect upon us for our stricter Profession of Religion. There are many encouraging Promises given to *Diligence* in the Word of God. I shall mention but one at present that agrees with my present Subject. *Prov. xxii. 29. Seest thou a Man diligent in his Business, he shall stand before Kings, he shall not stand before mean Men.* That is, “His good Report and his Reputation shall grow and encrease, that he shall be brought into more honourable Company, and to a more exalted Station.”

If we are *Servants*, let us devote our Time and Thoughts to the Business which our Superiors have intrusted us with, and seek their Interest with an honest Soul. If we are *Children and Scholars under Instruction*, let us apply our Minds to learn the things we are taught, and attend to the Instructions of those who teach us. Every one of us have our proper Work, which demands our Application to it.

There are many *Enemies to this Virtue*, many Practices inconsistent with the Character of *Diligence*,

as 'tis celebrated and recommended in the Word of God.

First, *Sloth* or *Laziness* stands foremost in this Rank. Surely the Powers of our Mind and Body were never made to be useless. *Go to the Ant, thou Sluggard*, and learn Industry of that little Animal. Can we think we were born to be Cumberers of the Ground, and meer Burdens of the Earth we dwell on? Let us shake off this stupid and infamous Humour, let us rise to an active Life, and answer the Ends of our Creation. And for the same Reason it is, that there ought to be a Restraint put upon an *Excess of Sleep and Slumber*. You know the Character of the drowzy Wretch, that turns from Side to Side *upon his Bed, as a heavy Door upon its Hinges*, and the *Sluggard*, who with *folded Hands* sits still and lets the Weeds grow over his Corn; but these Men shall be *clothed with Rags*, Prov. xxvi. 14.

Secondly, *Luxury and an intemperate Love of Pleasure*, is another *Enemy to Diligence* in our Callings. 'Tis an odious Character that is given to the Inhabitants of *Crete* by one of their own Poets; and the Spirit of God confirms the Truth of it, *Titus* i. 12. *The Cretans are evil Beasts, slow Bellies*; so shamefully engaged in Gluttony and the Luxury of the Palate, that they render themselves heavy, stupid, and unfit for Business: A lazy Generation of Men, that have much more Inclination to eat and drink, and live like Brutes, than to employ themselves in any honest Labour, that is worthy of human Nature, or becomes a Man.

Under the same Reproof I may justly bring an *excessive Indulgence of Sports or Recreations*, beyond what is necessary for the Refreshment of Nature, and the Recruit of our Spirits, in order to fulfil Duty with more Diligence: This was intimated in a former Discourse. 'Tis but a Character of *ill Report*, when a Man is too often found in the Place of Sports and unnecessary Diversions while he ought to be in his Shop,

Shop, or in other proper Business of his Life: *Prov. xxi. 27. He that loveth Pleasure, shall be a poor Man; and he that loves Wine and Oil, Feastings and Entertainments, he shall not be rich.*

Thirdly, *A tattling Humour, excessive Talking*, and an *idle inquisitive Impertinence*, are great Enemies also to that *Industry*, that is now recommended to us. *Solomon* assures us, that though there is *Profit in all Labour*, yet the *Talk of the Lips tendeth only to Penury*, *Prov. xiv. 23.* And he redoubles it upon our Ears, that a *prating Fool shall fall*, *Prov. x. 8, 10.* There are some Persons that love to talk of any thing, or every thing, besides their own Business; like foolish Children that turn over every Page of their Books, and flutter a little about every Part of them, besides where their Lesson is. Every moving Feather is ready to seize the Fancy of these Triflers, this fickle and talkative Race of Men: They are but taller Children. Every little Story entertains their idle Inclination, and gives them fresh Employment to tell it over again. They had rather do any thing than the Duty of the present Hour; they spend their Time like the *Inhabitants of Athens, in little else but hearing or telling some new thing.*

Some of these Persons are ready to intermingle themselves with every Man's Concernments, uncalled and undesired: They search into the Secrets of Families, in order to gratify a wicked Humour, to spread Abroad and publish some private Scandal. *They creep into Houses*, to make Mischief there, and by *tattling* and repeating Matters of Contest, *they separate very Friends*, and raise angry Quarrels in peaceful Families, *Prov. xvii. 9.* Such Persons seem to deserve the publick Censure of the Magistrate, in the opinion of the Apostle *Peter*, *1 Pet. iv. 15. But let none of you, that are Christians, suffer as an Evil-Doer, or as a Busy-Body in other Mens Matters.* He himself once fell under the Censure of *Christ* our Lord, for this inquisitive and needless Curiosity. *John xxi.*

21, 22. When St. Peter had received a Prophecy from his Master concerning his own Martyrdom, he had also an exprefs Notice what his own Business was, (*viz.*) to follow his Master. But Peter had a Mind to know what should become of John too; Lord, says he, and what shall this Man do or suffer? What if I will, says our blessed Lord, that he tarry till I come again? What is that to thee? Is that thy Business, Peter, to know what shall befall John? Mind thy own Duty, and follow thou me. A wise and divine Rebuke from our risen Saviour! After this, St. Peter well knew how to censure such Impertinence, and to reprove Busy-Bodies.

Of the same Mind is the Apostle Paul. He advises Women how to behave themselves, that they mayn't fall under this Charge. Let them guide the House, says he, and employ themselves in domestick Affairs: For if they neglect this Work, they learn to be idle, wandering about from House to House; and not only idle, but Tattlers also, and Busy-Bodies, speaking things which they ought not; gathering up Matter for Slander of their Neighbours at their next Visit, where every one is ashamed to be silent, and therefore each is ready to furnish the Company with their Share. But this Practice, in the Opinion of the sacred Writer, furnishes the Adversary with daily Occasion to slander Christianity, and to speak reproachfully of the Gospel, and 'tis a thing of very ill Fame, 1 Tim. v. 13, 14.

II. A publick Spirit is another thing of good Report. Though Christians must be diligent in their Business, yet they should not confine all their Cares within the narrow Circle of Self, but have a hearty Solitude for the Welfare of the Nation in which they dwell, for the Neighbours among whom they inhabit, for the Church of Christ in the World, and extend their Concern to the Happiness of Mankind. The Apostle directs Timothy to make Supplications, Prayers, and Intercessions



*intercessions for all Men*, and to take such a Satisfaction in the Mercies they receive, as to *give thanks* to God upon their Account; 1 *Tim.* ii. 1. He exhorts the *Ephesians* to *Prayer and Supplication for all the Saints*, *Ephes.* vi. 18. And what he taught, he also practised in an eminent and glorious Manner; *the Care of all the Churches came daily upon him*: And you find him in the Beginning of his Epistles lifting up his Petitions and his Praises to Heaven continually for the Churches to whom he writes.

*We should rejoice with them that rejoice, and weep with them that weep*, and share with our Fellow-Christians in their Joys and their Sorrows, that we may thereby double their Joys, and lighten the Weight of their Sorrows by a blessed Sympathy. We should *bear one another's Burdens, and so fulfil the Law of Christ*, *Rom.* xii. 15. *Gal.* vi. 2. And in 1 *Cor.* x. 24. he saith, *Let no Man seek his own, but every Man another's Wealth, or Welfare*; that is, "Let no Man be so wholly swallowed up in his own Profit and Peace, as utterly to neglect the Peace and Profit of his Neighbour." But though this be so honourable and becoming a Practice, yet it has ever been too much neglected, even among the Professors of the Gospel; for St. Paul tells the *Philippians*, that *Timothy* was a singular Instance of this good Quality: *Philip.* ii. 20, 21. *I have no Man like minded, who will naturally care for your State; for all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's.*

Some may be ready to raise an *Objection* here, and say, *How is this consistent with the former Character and Practice which I recommended, namely, That every Man mind his own Business?*

I grant that this ought generally to be our first Care, that we fulfil the Duties of our own particular Station well, and see to it, that our selves and our Household be supported: This is usually the loudest Call of Providence, for *he that provides not for those of his own House, when it is in his Power, does not*  
answer

answer the Demands of Christianity, but is worse than an *Infidel*, or one that has denied the Faith, 1 Tim. v. 8. But there are many sacred and civil Services may be done for the Neighbourhood, the Church, and the Nation, without any culpable Hindrance to our own Affairs. So much Time may be easily redeemed from Sloth and Slumber, from useles and impertinent Conversation, as the Publick may call for at our Hands. And when there is a Day of Distress or Trouble come upon our Friends, upon the Land wherein we dwell, or the Churches of Christ in the World, when Virtue and Religion are in sinking Circumstances, we are called sometimes to lay out a larger Part of our Time and Strength, our Interest and our Substance, for the Welfare of the Publick, which otherwise perhaps might be due to our selves, and our own Family. In such Cases as these, *Christian Prudence* must direct us how to distinguish wisely, and determine how far this *Self-Denial* is to be exercised, in order to promote the Happiness of Mankind, and the publick Honour of Christ. This is a *thing of good Report* in the Church and in the World, and it will turn to our own Honour in the Day of the Lord.

But let no Man deceive himself, and vainly imagine that he may lay claim to the Honour of a *publick Spirit*, because he spends half his Days in Places of publick Resort, and in fruitless Inquiries and Chatterings about the Affairs of Government, and the Business of the State; perhaps he extends his Cares also to *Muscovy* and *Persia*, as well as *Great Britain*, while the Care of his Shop is a little thing with him, the Business of his Study or Counting-House is forgotten, and his Family Complains of woful Neglect: Nor are publick Affairs mended by all his Impertinence.

[ If this Sermon be too long, it is best divided here. ]

III. *Regularity in the Conduct of our Affairs is a becoming Character, and will gain us a good Name amongst Men.* As there are many and various Duties that belong to the natural, the civil, and the religious Life; 'tis a piece of eminent Wisdom to appoint proper Seasons and Rules for the Performance of them; nor should we think it beneath us, as far as possible, to govern ourselves by those Rules, and keep to our own appointed Seasons; otherwise all our Affairs will be ready to run into Confusion; one Duty will be apt to intrench upon another, and some of the Duties of Life or Godliness will be neglected, or quite forsaken, under pretence of *want of Time*.

One thing that intrenches upon the regular Hours and Orders of Life, is a *trifling and dilatory Temper*, putting off necessary Business (whether it be Work or Devotion) till the last Moment; and then, if the least Accident intervenes, we have not left our selves sufficient Time to perform it. These are the Persons who are frequently found in a *Hurry and Confusion*, because they have neglected to do the proper Work in the proper Season. Their Business is always done in haste, and often unfinished. These are they who keep no Appointments, who are seldom true to their Hour, who make their Friends wait for them upon all Occasions, who often create Uneasiness to all the Company, and put a whole Family out of order. What an unbecoming Behaviour is this! What an ill Aspect it bears! especially if these *Delayers* are in any Degree inferior, or the younger Parts of a House. And yet it might easily be prevented, by taking the first Opportunity for every Business. O 'tis an excellent, a golden Rule, *Never leave that till to-morrow, which may be done to day, nor trust the Business of this Hour to the Care of the next*, for the next Hour is not thine.

When *Servants* are of this dilatory and trifling Humour, they waste their Master's Time perpetually,  
and

and put their Superiors to many Inconveniencies. They prevent one another's Business, as well as neglect their own. You would wonder how they could spend three or four Hours in a common Errand, and make a Family wait half a Day for a Message, that might be dispatch'd in half an Hour. They cannot keep their Eyes or their Ears from attending to every Object they meet; their endless Curiosity of Inquiry, and their irresistible Inclination to talk of every thing that does not concern them, is an everlasting Hindrance to their proper Work. This *active sort of Idleness* is much harder to be cured than that of the *slow and stupid kind*; and you see it belongs to the Poor as well as the rich; though it is a Matter of *Disreputation* and *Infamy* to both.

Persons of this unhappy Conduct, whether of high or low Degree, are in great Danger of trifling in the most sacred and divine Concernments, as well as in common Life. They sometimes manage their *spiritual and immortal Affairs* in the same dilatory manner, but with more dreadful and fatal Consequence. They put off *Repentance* from Day to Day, and delay their solemn Transactions with God, till Sickness seizes them, or till Death approaches: Then what Hurry of Spirit! what dreadful Confusion of Soul! what Tumults and Terrors overwhelm them! And it is well if the Matters of their Salvation be not unfinished at the last Hour, and themselves made miserable to all *Eternity*, because they trifled away *Life* and *Time*.

A *second Enemy to this regular Conduct of Life*, and which indeed is derived from the former, is this, *An Inversion of the Order of Nature, and a Change of the Seasons which God hath appointed for Business and Rest.*

I confess this is not now-a-days a Matter of ill Report in itself, however contrary it be to the *Laws of Nature and the Creation*: But 'tis attended with many *Irregularities*, and sometimes with *infamous Practices*

too :



too: And therefore I would spend one Page to give it an ill Name, and to bring it into just Discredit.

*God has made every thing beautiful in its Season, Eccles. iii. 11. The sun ariseth, and Man goeth forth to his Work until the Evening; Psal. civ. 22, 23.* 'Tis more natural and healthful to pursue the Concerns of Life, as much as possible, by Day-light. *Midnight Studies* are prejudicial to Nature: A painful Experience calls me to repent of the Faults of my younger Years, and there are many before me have had the same Call to Repentance. Wearing out the lightsome Hours in Sleep, is an unnatural Waste of Sun-Beams. There is no Light so friendly to animal Nature as that of the Sun. *Midnight Assemblies, Festivals, and Entertainments*, exhaust the Spirits, and make a needless Profusion of the Necessaries of Life: They carry a very ill Appearance with them, even where no Wickedness is indulged, they are Practices of *evil Report*, and deserve Censure and Shame.

It is no Honour to our whole Nation, that we have learnt the Fashion of doing nothing in the Morning; among *Persons of Mode* the Day often begins at Noon: The Hours of Business are grown much later among us than our Forefathers could bear. They knew the Worth of Day-light.

In some things indeed we are bound to comply with Custom, or we must forsake the World; for a few can never stem the general Tide, or reform a degenerate Age: And there are some few Trades and Employments which demand Labour at Night. But in our general Conduct we should endeavour to act more agreeably to the Laws of Creation and Nature, and to reduce Families to a little better Order, wheresoever we have Power and Influence. Surely it can be no great Hardship for any Persons in Health to begin their Day with the rising Sun, for almost half the Year. We should not think it sufficient to get up a little before Noon, nor should we turn the Morning of God and Nature into Midnight,

nor

nor make the Decline of the Sun serve for our Morning Work.

I would not be thought in this Page to reflect upon the *weak, the sickly, and the aged Parts of Mankind*, whose Nature may require longer Sleep, and a larger Degree of Rest to recruit their Spirits: Nor do I accuse those unhealthy Persons, who can get no Slumber till the Night is half spent, and are thereby constrained, meerly for the sake of Health, to let their Bed intrench upon so many Hours of Day-light: Yet I persuade my self, that if these last would but bear the Inconveniences they complain of for a Week or two, if they would break off their Morning-Slumbers early, and early betake themselves to Rest, Nature would quickly learn a better Habit, the Reformation would soon grow easy: And perhaps this might advance their Health in a sensible manner, beyond all their old Indulgences, or their present Expectations.

*An excessive Love of Company, an Affectation of going Abroad, a Delight in Wine and strong Drink, are the third sort of Enemies to that Regularity and Order which I am now recommending.* Such Practices are censured in the Word of God; I have called the Prophet *Isaiab*, in a former Discourse, to witness against the Drunkard, but I must ask leave to cite the same Text again, against the Wasters of Time in Taverns, or meaner Drinking-Houses. *Woe to them that goto their Cups in a Morning*: This throws all the Business of the Day out of Order; and sometimes they are tempted to *continue until Night*, or at least they return thither again and stay till Wine inflame them; then all the Follies of Life play their Parts; but they forget Religion, and *regard not the Work*, nor *Worship of the Lord*, Isa. v. 11, 12. How often has it been found, that the Religion of the Closet, as well as that of the Family, hath been shorten'd and omitted, and by Degrees thrust out of Doors, and forgotten, for want of shaking off every  
Impediment

impediment, and confining our selves to proper Seasons: We intend to fulfil our Duties, but we intend it at random, without keeping any Time for it: And thus some Households, that would be called *Christians*, live *without God in the World*. They that *tarry long at Wine*, or in any needless Company, and lengthen out the Hours of their needful Absence from Home, may count themselves guilty of the several Disorders that are committed in the Family; which would be rectified, or intirely prevented by the Presence of the Master.

I confess sometimes *necessary Business* detains a Person beyond his usual and appointed Hour: There must also be some Allowances made for the unhappy Engagements which may attend *some particular Callings* in the World. Our own Consciences must be the final Judges in this Case: But let us be faithful and honest, and frequently make an Enquiry, whether our Conduct be *regular* or no; and whether it be the *Necessity of Affairs* that intrenches upon the Seasons of Duty, or whether it be a *careless Indifference of Spirit*. Good Orders in a Household, and regular Hours for all the Duties and Enjoyments of Life, give Beauty and Ornament to Life itself: Like a musical Instrument, where every String is wound up to strike its proper Note, and the skilful Musician keeps his Time, how does it entertain the Ear with innocent Pleasure, and refresh the Heart, when practised at proper Seasons? Such a Family appears like a *Bethel*, a House of God, and the Lord himself delights to dwell in it. O may it be my Lot and Portion always to inhabit in such a Tabernacle, till I lay down this Body in the Dust, and my Soul arises to the well-ordered Family of Heaven!

IV. *Sorting our selves with the best Company is another beautiful Part of Christian Conduct, and procures a good Report.* By the *best of Company*, I don't intend the *Greatest* or the *Richest*, nor the most *Inge-*

nious and Witty; for there are some of these that are vain and vile enough; but *the best*, in my Esteem, are those who are most *Virtuous*, most *Pious*, most *Knowing* and *Wise*, or those that are *seeking after Virtue, Piety, and Wisdom*. Thus by Conversation with the *one*, we may be always *doing good*, and with the *other* we may be always *receiving some good*. *He that walketh with wise Men, shall grow yet wiser, but the Companion of Fools shall be destroyed*; Prov. xiii. 20. *Be not deceived, God is not mocked, evil Communications corrupt good Manners*. A heathenish Poet, and an inspired Apostle agree in these Words, 1 Cor. xv. 33. If we are engaged much in Converse with those that are light, and frothy, and vain, we shall gain the same Levity of Temper. If we talk much with the Profane, we shall be tempted now and then to a profane Expression too. *Can a Man touch Pitch and not be defiled?* Can a Man pass through the Flames, and his Clothes not be singed? Neither can those that walk frequently and delightfully amongst light, vain, intemperate Persons, escape being defiled by them.

'Tis true, the Apostle tells us, if we would utterly seclude our selves from all manner of Converse with Persons of ill Character, we must abandon Society, and almost *go out of the World*, 1 Cor. v. 10. But the meaning of the Apostle, when he bids us avoid evil Companions, is, as much as possible, to shun their Company; see therefore that it is a necessary Call of Providence leads you amongst them; otherwise abstain. Those who give themselves up to be entertained by every one that will entertain them, those who will walk with every Companion, and will herd with every Drove, they are in danger of being corrupted with any Vice, and of learning every ill Principle.

But if through the Grace of God, we should escape the Infection of Error or Sin, yet we should lose our good Name by keeping ill Company. A Delight

in



in base and worthless Companions, will make the World judge that we are like them: Whereas we shall gain part of the good Character of our Associates and Acquaintance, and derive Honour from them, if we are so happy as to have Friendship and Intimacy with Persons of Piety, Learning, and Virtue. May these be the Friends of my Choice, and my Companions for ever!

V. *Abstinence from the utmost Bounds of things lawful* is another Practice of *good Report* amongst Men, and especially amongst Christians. 'Tis but a narrow Line in many Cases, that divides between a *lawful* and a *sinful* Practice; and if we will venture, as near as possible to the very Borders of what we think lawful, we shew too great an Inclination to the bordering Iniquity, and we shall often be in danger of treading on forbidden Ground. If we indulge the Love of Pleasure, or give an unguarded Loose to any lawful Passion, we shall find it difficult to withhold the Violence of corrupt Nature from transgressing the lawful Bounds. If a wild Horse be indulg'd in his Career, 'tis well if he does not break the Reins, and sling the Rider. 'Tis a foolish Fancy to walk upon the Edge of a Precipice, unless we could infallibly secure our Head from Giddiness, or our Feet from Stumbling. 'Tis much safer therefore to keep a proper Distance from fatal Danger. The World will give us but an ill Character, and say very justly concerning us, that *we are not much afraid of Vice, if we dare rashly venture into Temptation.*

'Tis the Advice of the Holy Spirit, and St. Paul to the Christian Converts, *Abstain from all Appearance of Evil*, 1 Thess. v. 22. And the Apostle Jude requires us to *hate even the Garments that are spotted by the Flesh*, Jude ver. 23. Every thing that looks like Guilt should forbid our Approach; we should chuse to stand afar off, and withhold our Desires, lest we defile our Consciences, and bring a Blemish upon

our Christian Character. What an Honour is it to any Man, when it is said concerning him, "He has a tender Soul, and a Conscience that will not stretch to the Length of the loose Customs and Fashions of the Times; he dares not allow himself all the Liberties which are innocent and lawful, lest he should wound his own Spirit, and his good Name, by venturing too near to the Borders of Iniquity." Let such a Temper be our constant Guard and Ornament.

VI. *Following the common Practices of the Saints in doubtful Matters*, is another thing of good Report, and ought to be so among those that profess the Name of Christ: Whether it be in our Trade and Business, in our Apparel, or our Visits, in our Forms of Address to our Superiors, or common Methods of Conversation and Civility, of Recreation, or Entertainment, let the general Customs of the Saints of the purest Ages, or the Customs of the purest Churches, and the best Christians in our own Age, be a Direction to our Practice. *Ask for the good old way*, says the Prophet Jeremy, and if we know not what Part to chuse, let us go by the Footsteps of the Flock of Christ. Enquire what the Followers of our Lord have done in past Ages, and what the wisest and best of them do in our own Age, and this will give us a considerable Assistance, to determine what ought to be our Practice.

In 1 Cor. xi. 16. the Apostle Paul seems to refer to this general Rule, for our Determination in doubtful Matters. When he had been proposing the Law of Nature, or the Order of Creation, to direct the Man and the Woman what sort of Coverings they ought to wear, (viz.) *That a Woman ought not to be uncovered, and that a Man should not wear long Hair, (i. e. should not nourish his Hair to make it grow long, as Women, nor manage it with a nice and effeminate Curiosity)* he concludes with this Sentence,

If

If any Man seem to be contentious, that is, if any Man be not contented with the Arguments I have brought, but will carry on Contention and Dispute, let him remember this decisive Argument, that *we have no such Custom, nor the Churches of God*; we the Preachers of the Gospel, and the Apostles of Christ, have neither found nor approved such sort of Customs among the Christians where we have lived, nor are they practised in any of the Churches of God, which we have heard of.

I will readily allow, that the strict Professors of Religion, in some particular Ages of the Church, may have generally indulged either some unreasonable Scruples, or some unreasonable Liberties. There are some Practices of evident and undoubted Lawfulness, which have been forbidden in severe and dreadful Language by some or other of our religious Ancestors; such as *wearing borrowed Hair, or suffering our own to reach the Shoulders; using any thing that borders upon Lot or Chance, except in Matters of sacred or solemn Concernment; wishing a Friend's Health when we drink; practising any Part of our civil Calling after Sun-set on Saturdays, or even calling the Months, or the Days of the Week, by Names borrowed from the Heathens, such as Monday or Tuesday, January or February*: Yet in such Cases as these, had I lived amongst them, I would have conformed to their Customs, and have given no offence; but I would have taken every proper Occasion to shew that these were unnecessary Scruples.

This was the Conduct of St. Paul, in the Controversy about eating Meats offered to Idols, 1 Cor. viii. 8. *Meat commendeth us not to God, neither if we eat are we the better, neither if we eat not are we the worse*. There he declares how needless these Scruples were; and 1 Cor. x. 25. to shew their Christian Liberty, where no scrupulous Person was present and opposed it, he bids them *eat whatsoever is sold in the Shambles, asking no Questions for Conscience-sake*. But in

both these Places he cautions them against offending the weaker Brethren, and shews also how afraid he was of giving Offence, or acting in their Presence contrary to their Practices, even tho' they were built on needless Scruples, *ver. 13. I will eat no Flesh while the World stands, if it make my Brother to offend, i. e.* if it tempt him to grow bold, and venture upon the same Food against his Conscience. And the Apostle practised this Selfdenial, lest he should *sin against his weak Brother*, lest he should *grieve him* by this *uncharitable* Licence, as *Rom. xiv. 15.* This holy Caution and Tenderneſs of offending the Weak, was the constant Practice of that blessed Saint, who had more Knowledge than all of us, but he had more Condeſcenſion and Selfdenial too. O that we might all make him our Pattern, and practice the Charity that we preach so loudly, and profess with such a modern Assurance!

There are other Practices which might be comprized under this general Character, and recommended as *Things of good Report.* But I must not draw such Discourses to a tiresome length, which, perhaps, may create but too much Pain and Uneasiness, by the very Sense and Subject of which they treat. Yet certainly 'tis a part of our Duty and our Interest to know, and meditate, and practice those things that may gain us a good Name and Reputation in the World, and may brighten our Character among the Churches of *Christ*; and to avoid every thing that would blemish our Honour, or sink our Esteem among wise and good Men.

What Arguments may be drawn from the *Light of Nature* to enforce this Exhortation, or what more powerful Motives are deriv'd from the *Gospel*, to awaken and excite us to the Practice of all that is *honourable*, shall be consider'd in the next Discourse, when I treat of the Matters of *Virtue* and *Praise*, which are recommended in the last Words of my Text.





# SERMON XXX.

Courage and Honour; or, Virtue and Praise.

PHILIP. iv. 8.

— *If there be any Virtue, and if there be any Praise, think on these Things.*

Εἴ τις ἀρετὴ καὶ εἴ τις ἐπαινος, &c.

**V**IRTUE is an honourable and extensive Name: 'Tis used by moral Writers to include all the Duties we owe to our *selves*, or our *Fellow-Creatures*; such as *Sobriety, Temperance, Faithfulness, Justice, Prudence, Goodness, and Mercy*; and the Sense of it is sometimes stretched so far, as to comprehend also the Duties of Religion which we owe to *God*. But let us take notice, that the first and original Signification of the Word both in the *Greek* and *Latin* Tongues is much more limited, and it means only *Power* or *Courage*.

The *Greek* Word, ἀρετὴ, used here by the Apostle, is derived from Ἄρης, the Name of *Mars*, or the Heathen *God of War*: And doubtless the most antient meaning of it amongst the *Greek Writers* was *warlike Valour*, tho', in time, the *Philosophers* enlarged the Sense of it to include *every moral Excellency*.

The several Places in the New Testament where this Word is used, have chief Reference to some *Work of glorious Power* when it is applied to God, or *Courage* when it refers to Men. I wish I could stay here to explain them all, but I must mention one of them, (*viz.*) 2 Pet. i. 5. *Add to your Faith Virtue, to Virtue Knowledge, to Knowledge Temperance, &c. Virtue* is to be added to *Faith*, that is, next to your *Belief* of the Gospel, get *Courage* to profess what you believe: 'Tis not to be supposed, that in this Place *Virtue* can signify the *whole of Morality*, because the particular Virtues of *Temperance, Patience, and Charity* are named also: And therefore this must signify some Part of Morality distinct from the rest, (*viz.*) *a Strength or Fortitude of Soul*.

And for the same Reason the Word *Virtue* in my Text cannot signify the *whole System of moral Duties*, because St. Paul in the same Verse had been recommending *Truth, Justice, and Purity or Temperance*, which are so many Pieces of Morality; and 'tis not reasonable to imagine that he brings in a *general Name* that comprehends them all in the midst of so many *Particulars*, which is contrary to the Use of all Writers, and to his own Custom too. I confess if he had said, *If there be any other Virtue*, (as he does in the like Case, Rom. xiii. 9. when he had omitted any Particular) we might then have understood *Virtue* in the general Sense; but now it is evident, that he means a *particular Excellency*, distinct from those before-mentioned; and the Word itself requires us to understand a *brave, bold, and generous Spirit and Practice*. He recommends to them a great and excellent Behaviour, wherein their *bold Courage* may appear, when the Call of Providence gives a just Occasion.

*Courage* is a Virtue which stands in Opposition both to *Fear* and *Shame*; and it guards the Mind of Man from the evil Influence of both those Passions. The Man of *Courage* has not such a feeling Fondness  
for

for his *Flesh* nor his *Estate*, as to be afraid to profess his Sentiments, or to fulfil his Duty at every Call of Providence, though his Estate may suffer Damage by it, or his *Flesh* be exposed to Pain: Nor has he such a Tenderneſs for his Honour, as to ſecure it with the Loſs of his Innocence. He is not aſhamed to appear for Virtue in an Age of Vice and Scandal: He ſtands up boldly for the Honour of his God, and ventures a thouſand Perils rather than wound his Conſcience, or betray his Truſt: He dares profeſs and praſtiſe Temperance among an Herd of Drunkards, and Purity in the miſt of the Lewd and Unclean: The *Man of Courage* can deſpiſe the Threatnings of the *Great*, and the Scoſs of the *Witty*, conſcious of his own Integrity and Truth. He can face and oppoſe the World with all its Terrors, and travel onwards in the Paths of Piety without Fear. *The Righteous Man is bold as a Lion*, Prov. xxviii. 1.

Now it is the Apoſtle's Advice to the *Philippian* Converts, that whenſoever there is any juſt Occaſion given to exert their *Fortitude* (whether it be in the Defence of the Rights of Mankind, and the Liberties of their Country, or in Vindication of the Cauſe of God or Virtue) let the *Chriſtian* take thoſe Opportunities to ſpeak his Mind, and ſhew his Courage; let him make it appear that the Meek of the Earth may ſometimes reſiſt the mighty Oppreſſors, that the *Followers of the Lamb* dare to oppoſe the *wild Beaſts of the Age*, and are ready to ſacrifice all that human Nature calls dear for the Service of God, or the Welfare of their Fellow-Creatures.

The *Heathen* World may derive ſome Arguments from the Light of Reaſon, and ſome perhaps from more corrupt and ſelfiſh Principles, to awaken their *Valour*, and to raiſe *Heroes* amongſt them: But there is nothing among all the Writings of the *Philoſophers*, or the Examples of their real or their fabled *Heroes*, that can raiſe and ſupport ſo illuſtrious and divine a *Courage*, as the Principles and the Patterns with  
which

which the *Gospel of Christ* has furnished us ; whether we look to *Jesus*, the Founder of our Religion, the Son of God in our Nature, or to his Apostles, or to the primitive Martyrs, among whom some of the weaker Sex and the weaker Age, have out-shone the Glory, and darkened the Lustre of all the great Men of *Heathenism*.

What blessed Views hath the Gospel given us of Heaven and future Happiness, to animate our Zeal, and to engage us to the boldest Efforts of Goodness ! What Promises of Almighty Power to assist us in our sacred Attempts, and to bear up our Spirits ! What rich and infallible Assurances have we in the Word of God to support our highest Expectations, that if *we are faithful to the Death, we shall receive a Crown of Life !* And *Jesus* our Fore-runner hath already taken Possession of all these Prizes and Glories to reward the Conquerors.

Shall we sink and despond at any dark Appearances ? Shall our Spirits fail us in the midst of Duty, when we have so many divine Motives to *Valour* and *holy Fortitude* ? Methinks there should be nothing too hard for a *Christian* to undertake or suffer, when God and Providence call him to it. I confess that Flesh and Blood are frail and feeble : Animal Nature overwhelms the Soul with its Shudderings, and forbids the Execution of the bravest Purposes. 'Tis only *Grace*, divine *Grace*, that can strengthen the trembling *Christian*, and make him venture through Dangers and Death in the Way to the heavenly Crown. 'Tis this gives Power to the Promises, and makes the Saint believe the Performance. 'Tis this sets Heaven before his Eyes, and gives it such an attractive Influence, such a sovereign Conquest over all his Fears ; it even braces the Sinews of Nature, and exalts the Spirits to despise Danger and Pain. What Wonders of holy Fortitude might a Christian perform, if the Eye of his Faith were kept always open, and firmly fix'd on those bright and everlasting Invisibles ?

But



But I shall enlarge no farther on this Argument of *Christian Courage*, and I am the more inclin'd to dismiss this Subject at present, having reserv'd some Discourses on it for another Season \*.

I proceed therefore to the last Exhortation in my Text, *If there be any Praise*, any Action that deserve Honour amongst Men, *think on these Things*, engage your selves in the *Practice*, and obtain the Honour. The *Praise* which the Apostle here recommends, may be described as *Cicero*, the famous Roman Orator, describes *Glory*; 'tis the *concurrent and unanimous Commendation of good Men, or the general Voice of wise and uncorrupted Judges, concerning any eminent Practice of Virtue*.

The holy Apostle had just before recommended *Things of good Report*, and now he exhorts them to the Practice of *laudable Actions*, or Things that merit *Praise*. The difference between these two is this; *A good Report* signifies a clear and unblemished Character, fair Reputation among Men, a good Name among those with whom our daily Acquaintance lies, and our civil Conversation and Business. But *Praise* implies a considerable Degree of Applause or Honour, obtain'd by some eminent Actions, or some extraordinary Instances of Wisdom, Courage, or Goodness. A Man that has never attain'd to any great *Degree of Excellence* above his Neighbours, may yet have a *fair Reputation* in the World: But the Word *Praise* seems to imply a *great and honourable Name*, as well as a *good* one.

I shall mention but *two general Instances* wherein we may suppose the Apostle recommends to us the Practice of those Things that are *laudable*: One is, *an extraordinary Conduct in common Affairs*; the other is *an Improvement of the Seasons, or Occasions of extraordinary Virtue*.

\* See the two following Sermons.

I. 'Tis a thing Praise-worthy to labour after an extraordinary Conduct and uncommon Excellence in our common Affairs of Life, to excel all others in the things that relate to our Station in the World. Let each of us search and inquire, what is it within our Reach that shines brightest among Men, and then pursue it with Vigour.

If a Person, who professes Religion in the strictest Manner, and in the purest Forms, be made a Magistrate or publick Officer, let him do something extraordinary for the publick Welfare, if it be possible, and merit the publick Thanks and Praise of the Community. So if a Man be called to the Ministry of the Gospel, let him imitate the blessed Apostle in Zeal for Christ, as in 1 Cor. xv. 10. *I laboured more than they all.* Let there be no Bounds to our Desires of Excellence, and our Zeal for the Salvation of Men. *Covet earnestly the best Gifts,* says the Apostle, 1 Cor. xii. ult. and animate them with the noblest Graces. There is a holy Emulation wherein we may vie with one another, and each of us get as near Perfection as possible. This is *Praise-worthy*. I told you before, that Magistrates or Ministers must be diligent in their Work to gain a good Report, but they must double that Diligence to obtain special Praise.

So in the most common Employments of Life, and the Management of daily Affairs abroad or at home, we should aspire to be Patterns of every thing that is good and laudable, that we may all be able to say as St. Paul, *Be ye Followers of me, even as I of Christ,* 1 Cor. xi. 1.

Am I a Master? Let me have a holy ambition to be the best of Masters, and by an excellent Conduct constrain all my Servants to praise and love me; except such vulgar and brutal Souls that no Kindness can engage, no Merit can oblige, and no Virtue can influence. Am I a Servant? Let my Zeal for my Master's

Master's Interest exceed all my Fellows, and my Faithfulness and Diligence in every Duty extort Honour even from those who envy me, and deserve the Esteem and Love of those that are above me.

If I am an *Artificer*, and God hath given me any superior Talents or Capacities, I should not employ those superior Talents in Trifles, but use them to some most valuable Purposes, for the Benefit of Mankind, beyond what former Ages have known. I should promote useful Knowledge, if I am a *Philosopher*, and carry it on farther than my Fathers have done. These are some Instances wherein we may perform *Actions of Praise* that are becoming a Man or a Christian.

II. 'Tis a thing Praise-worthy to *impure all the Seasons and Occasions of extraordinary Virtue, to seize on those special Opportunities which Providence now and then may give us to exert uncommon Degrees of Wisdom or Mercy, Activity or Courage.*

We are always required to be *faithful to our Rulers, and kind to our Neighbours and Friends*: But when our King or our Country is in some imminent Danger, when some threatening Mischief hangs over a Family, or a City, when our Friend or Brother, or even a Stranger, is in immediate Peril of Life, there may be a glorious Occasion for some great and generous Exercise of Loyalty, Fortitude, Compassion or Love, to save a Friend or a Stranger, a Prince or a Nation. All the World shall agree to praise the Man who performs that noble Service.

We are bound always to be *liberal, and to give to the Poor*, but sometimes we have an Opportunity to exercise that Grace of *Liberality* in a more ample and generous Manner, so as to deserve and obtain an honourable Name: As when a great Number of distressed Wretches come to the City or Place where we dwell, or when some general Calamity involves all our poor Neighbours, and reduces them to great Straits,

Straits, then we should exercise Bounty beyond the common Measure: Thus a *Christian* shall have the Honour of relieving the Poor more than *Heathens* do, or those who make no Profession of Godliness.

So in the Practice of *Charity and Forgiveness*, *Jesus* our Lord requires us to *forgive our Enemies*, and to *do good to those that hate, and abuse, and persecute us*: But when it lies in our Power to do a most considerable Service to a Person that has done us the highest Injury, then there is a special Providence calling us to perform a glorious *Action of Praise*. Such was the Character of that great and good Man Archbishop *Cranmer*, of whom it is said, if any Man had done him an Injury, he would ever afterwards be his Friend.

In short, Whensoever an Occasion arises to give an eminent and glorious Proof of *Generosity* or *Compassion*, of *Gratitude* or *Goodness*, of *Zeal for God*, or *Love to Men*, 'tis the Apostle's Advice, that a *Christian* should seize the golden Hour, and not suffer a *Heathen* to prevent or exceed him. And among Christians, let those who profess the severest Virtue, and the purest Methods of *Christianity*, be the Persons who seize most of these Opportunities to perform Actions worthy of Praise. But when there is any thing *mean and base, scandalous and sordid*, appears in the World, as it never should be said that a *Christian* has done it, so neither would I ever have such a Scandal fall upon any Person who professes the strictest Forms of Godliness.

I come in the next Place to consider, *What Arguments may be drawn from the Light of Reason, to excite us to Actions of good Report, and such as are worthy of special Praises*; for in the foregoing Discourse I told you, that I should join the *Arguments* or *Motives* together, which belong to both these Exhortations.

I. If



I. *If a Person practises Things of good Report, and acquires to himself Reputation and Praise amongst Men, he does himself and his Family a considerable Kindness by it.* If a Man has not a good Name, he can neither expect to be entertain'd in any Society with Pleasure, nor to receive any special Benefits from the World. A Person of *ill Report* is rather hated than beloved, he is shunned and avoided rather than desired, and his Neighbours will treat him with Neglect rather than Assistance. His very Name is mentioned with Disgrace instead of Praise. Whereas on the other hand, a Man whose excellent Character has deserv'd a *good Report and Honour* among his Fellow-Citizens, has every one ready to invite him to their Company, and willing to reach out to him their friendly Hand when he is fallen into Danger or Distress.

Besides, such a Person lays up *Honour for his Household*, and provides the *Friendship of Mankind for the Help of his Family* in Generations yet to come. 'Tis confessed indeed, that the Spirit of the World has too much Baseness in it, and too great a Neglect of real Merit: Yet when a Man has deserv'd exceeding well of his Country, and acquired any special Degrees of *Praise or Renown* amongst them, the World is not yet quite so brutal and degenerate, but that it has given many Instances of Bounty and Goodness to the Posterity of a Man of Honour. *His Name shall be had in everlasting Remembrance, and the Generation of the Upright shall be blessed,* Psal. cxii. 2, 6.

II. *A Man that has obtained a good Report and Honour in the World, by many reputable Actions, is capable of much greater Service both to God and his Fellow-Creatures.* If we have gain'd Esteem and Reputation among Men, they will be more ready to hearken to our Counsel, and comply with our Advice. We shall have more Influence on Mankind, both to promote

promote the Honour of God, and the Benefit of Men. A Word that we speak, will make deeper Impression, and be attended with greater Success. A Word or a Look of *Cato* among the *Romans*, would do more to restrain Vice, and to shame the Vicious, than the Frown of an Emperor.

III. *There is so much real and inward Satisfaction arises from a good Character, obtained by a Life of Virtue and Piety, that a Man who knows the Pleasure of it, would not renounce the Practices which may attain it.* I confess it is a more important Matter to secure a good Conscience than a good Name, and to obtain Praise in the Sight of God, than in the Lips of Men: But where both these are join'd together by the Favour of divine Providence, our Virtue and Piety has a larger Reward, and our Natures are so framed and composed, that we cannot help taking some Satisfaction in it. *Prov. xv. 30. A good Report maketh the Bones fat; that is, as one expresses it, it revives the Heart to such a Degree, as renders the Body more healthful and vigorous.*

Methinks those Persons have something very degenerate in them, and their Conduct is a little unnatural, who seem to have lost the very Desire of a good Name or Reputation. I cannot but wonder to hear a Person boast of his Scorn and contempt of it in such Language as this; *I'll pursue my own Design, I'll gratify and please myself, and I care not what the World says of me.* Surely if such Language did become a Christian, the Scripture would not be so solicitous to recommend a good Name, and Things of good Report.

This naturally leads me to consider, *What Influence Christianity has to excite us to the Practice of reputable Actions, and such as deserve Honour amongst Men.*

Here we may first take notice, *how often the Scripture proposes Honour as a Reward of Goodness and Virtue.*

*Virtue.* Our Saviour promises it to those that are humble and condescending; "If thou art ready at some Entertainment to seat thy self in a lower Place, *Luke xiv. 10.* *The Master of the Feast shall exalt thee, and thou shalt have Worship in the Presence of those that sit at Meat with thee; for he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.* St. Paul tells the Christians, *Do that which is good; and thou shalt have Praise from the ruling Power, for Magistrates are appointed for the Praise of them that do well;* *1 Pet. ii. 14.* Solomon proposes the same Motive, *Prov. iv. 7, 8.* *Wisdom is the principal Thing, therefore get Wisdom; she shall bring thee to Honour when thou dost embrace her.* The Apostle recommends often to the Christians of his Day a good Name amongst Infidels and Heathens, a good Report of them which are without; and he mentions it as an eminent Character of a Companion of Titus, that his Praise is in the Gospel throughout all the Churches, *2 Cor. viii. 18.* And 'tis recorded to the Honour of Demetrius by St. John, that he had a good Report of all Men, even of the Truth itself, *John Epist. iii.* Christians and Heathens speak well of him, and his good Character is just and true. Nor must it be forgotten, that in this little Collection of Advices in my Text, the Apostle twice recommends such Practices as deserve Honour among Men, (*viz.*) Things of good Report, and Things worthy of Praise.

Surely if we did but consider how much our Saviour and his Gospel gain by it in the World, we should ever be engaged in Works of good Report, and practising that which may redound to our Praise, for hereby we spread a good Savour of the Name of Christ wide in the World, and our holy Religion reaps sensible Honour and Advantage by it. When the Name of any Person is celebrated amongst Men for something great and useful, when his Deeds are mentioned with publick Praise, 'tis quickly enquired, *What Religion is he of? Is he a Heathen?* Then the Glory will be ascribed to Idolaters, and the Honour perhaps be

given to their Idols. Is he a *Christian*? Then the Name of *Christ* our Lord will gain Reputation by it, and Men will speak more favourably of that Doctrine which was adorn'd with such eminent Virtue and Piety. This did unknown Service to the Gospel in the first Propagation of it, when it appear'd in the World, that the Characters and the Lives of *Christians* were lovely, that their Works were all *Goodness*, that they were Persons of an excellent Spirit, and obtained a good Report among their Heathen Neighbours; they saw their good Works, and were thereby led, by Degrees, to glorify their heavenly Father, and their Saviour.

And where there is any Separation made from the publick Worship of a Nation, with a Profession to reform any Corruptions of Doctrine or Practice, how much Honour would be done to these Reforming Principles, and how much Service to this Interest, if every one that is engaged in it were always practising *Things of good Report*, and aiming at some Eminency and uncommon Goodness in their various Stations of Life. If therefore we have any Love for *Christ* our Lord, if we have any Zeal for his Glory, if we have any Regard to the Honour of the Gospel, or if we would bring any Credit to the particular Profession we make, let us set a severe Watch upon our selves against every thing that would blemish our Character in the World, and let us aspire to all superior Excellencies that are within our Reach, that we may be *to the Praise of the Glory of his Grace, who has made us acceptable in the Beloved*.

'Tis necessary here to remove *two or three Objections* out of the way, that may seem to attend this Exhortation of the Apostle.

The *First* is this. If a good Name be so valuable a thing, why should there be such a *Wo* denounced by our Saviour against those that have the good Word of all Men? *Luke vi. 26. Wo unto you when*  
all



*all Men shall speak well of you, for so did their Fathers to the false Prophets.*

I. *Answer.* That the Design of our Saviour is to shew, that no Man in a degenerate and corrupt Age, can attain the high Esteem and hearty good Word of all Persons in the World, but those who are *Time-servers* and *Hypocrites*, who can suit themselves to every Company, and comply with every Change of the Times; who can profess to be religious, and yet indulge themselves or others in the Practice of their secret Iniquities; such were the *false Prophets* of old. Such a Person as this may for a short Season get all Men to speak well of him. The Drunkards will commend him, for he can be drunk as well as they; and the Swearer, for he can join with them in swearing; and the Men of Piety may be deceived in him, and give him a *good Report*, for his Tongue is tipt with religious Language, and he seems to be a Saint: But in Reality he is an *universal Hypocrite*, and true to nothing. Our Lord Jesus hates and censures such a Character as this is, and this is the Design of his Reproof.

*Again,* Let it be Noted, that this sort of Sinners can hold the good Word of all Men but for a very short Time. The Drunkards, the Profane, and the Lewd, may care for a Man for a Season, who complies with their Vices; yet when they hear that he pretends to be religious among Persons of Piety, they will speak Evil of him in abundance, and brand him for an Hypocrite, which is a more loathsome Name; and his pious Acquaintance, when they shall find out his Practices of secret Wickedness, they will justly fix the same odious Character upon him: Thus he who before had the good Word of all Men, shall then be loaded with publick Scandal and Infamy.

I add further, That a *good Report* signifies a good Character and honourable Reputation among all wise

and good Men; upon the Account of valuable Qualities, and the Exercise of Virtue and Goodness; and where a Man manages his Affairs with an excellent Conduct in this Respect, and keeps himself without a Blemish, he will command some Degree of Esteem and Reverence from the viler Part of the World: His good Name will be *general*, tho' perhaps not *universal* and if the wicked World finds Occasion to speak evil of him in any thing, 'tis only in *the Matters of his God*, and his exemplary Practice of Piety. This Thought introduces

The *Second Objection*, (viz.) If a good Name amongst Men be so desirable, why does our Saviour say, *Matt. v. 11. Blessed are ye when Men shall revile you, and shall speak all manner of Evil against you, for my sake; then rejoice ye and be exceeding glad, for great is your Reward in Heaven, for so persecuted they the Prophets that were before you?*

*Answer.* It is supposed that the *Evil* which Men speak of you is *false*; for so our Saviour expresseth it, *when they shall speak all manner of Evil against you, falsely for my sake.* They shall scandalize you as being *ill Men*, meerly because you are *Christians*; and throw upon you many *Odioms*, which your Practice has never deserv'd, on purpose to expose the *Christian Religion*. The Apostle *Peter* agrees with our Lord *Jesus Christ* in the same Design, *1 Pet. iii. 16. &c. Keep a good Conscience, that whereas they speak Evil of you as Evil-doers, they may be ashamed while they falsely accuse your good Conversation in Jesus Christ.*

Now when it appears to be pure Hatred of God and of Goodness, of *Christ* and his Gospel, for which you are reproached, then you have Cause to rejoice, because *Christ* is on your Side: So he was reproached in the Days of his *Flesh*, so the Prophets that went before him, and so the Apostles that succeeded him. *1 Pet. iv. 15, 16. The Spirit of God and of Glory resteth upon you, for on their Part he is evil spoken of, but on your Part he is glorified.* Happy are ye,

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ye, for *Christ* and you are join'd together in the same Cause ; and you who have glorified him on Earth, shall be glorified together with him in Heaven.

The *Third Objection* is this ; If Praise amongst Men be lawful to be sought, how comes it to pass that there are so many Reproofs given to those who *seek the Praise of Men* ? How can these Scriptures be reconciled with some others that are cited before to encourage *Actions worthy of Praise* ! How often does our Saviour severely rebuke the *Pharisees* for this Practice, that *they do their good Works to be seen of Men* ? Matt. vi. 2, 5, 16. John v. 44.

*Answer.* It is evident that these *Hypocrites* whom our Saviour reproves, neglected all inward Piety before God, and practised the outward Forms of Godliness meerly to gain the Praise of Men, *they loved and valued it more than the Praise of God*, John xii. 43. *They received Honour of one another*, and had no Concern about that superior Blessing, that divine Esteem and Approbation which God only can bestow, and which only would stand them in Stead hereafter. Where the *Praise of God* is inconsistent with the *Praise of Men*, there it is evident we must despise the Censures or the Praises of the World, and seek the divine Approbation only : But where these two Benefits may be happily conjoin'd, we are not bound to separate them. God never requires us to seek *Infamy and Reproach*, or to abandon that Honour that belongs to Truth and Goodness.

But that I may more effectually guard every Christian against all the Dangers and Temptations that may attend a good Name, and Honour in the World, I would conclude the Discourse with these four Advices.

I. *Make not the Praise of Men your chief Aim or Design in any thing you do : But let it be your first and chiefest Care to approve your selves to God and your own Con-*

sciences. Do those Actions that are worthy of *Praise*; and whether the World acknowledge it or no, your Souls will find inward Peace, *your Labour of Love* shall not be forgotten of God, *He is faithful who hath promised.*

II. *If you are so happy as to obtain the Esteem of Men, set a Guard upon your Soul, lest Pride and Vanity take Occasion to arise and shew themselves. Have a Care lest Satan, the Tempter, gain an Advantage against you by the Fruits of your Virtue and the Eminence of your Graces. Pride is such a cursed twining Weed, it will sometimes root itself in Virtue and Honour, it will grow up to an equal Height, and makes its Supporters wither and die.*

III. *Let all the Honour you acquire amongst Men, be improved to the Honour of your God and Saviour. If you make your own Applause your great End, Jesus will say to you another Day, as he did once to the Pharisees, Verily I say unto you, ye have your Reward: The Praise of Men will be your whole Recompence, and there is nothing more remains for you. Whensoever therefore you receive Applause from the World, make the World know that it was not the Man but the Christian that practised the Virtue, and gain'd the Praise. Not I, but the Grace of God which was with me. If you so manage all your laudable Actions, that Jesus Christ and his Name may gain some Honour by them, this shall turn to your Praise and Glory in the Day of Christ, as well as to the Praise of God your Saviour.*

IV. *When the Providence of God and his Grace have favoured you so far as to gain a good Character in the World, have a Care of every thing that may impeach your Honour, or sully your Reputation. Remember the Lesson that Solomon teaches you from so contemptible a thing as a dead Fly; a few of them will cause the*  
Ointment



*Ointment of the Apothecary to send forth a stinking Savour, so does a little Folly disgrace a Man who is in Reputation for Wisdom and Honour, Eccl. x. 1. The Blemish that arises from one base or foolish Action, will darken a bright Character, and cancel the Honour that has cost the Labour of many Years to acquire: And the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ will suffer much by it also, if those Persons once descend to Folly and Disgrace, who have risen high before in the Regions of Wisdom and publick Esteem.*

Happy those Christians who walk closely with God to the End of Life, and keep their Garments unspotted! When they die, they leave a perfumed Name behind them to the Churches, and to the Families to which they have belong'd; and perhaps they bequeath a lasting Honour to Religion as long as the World shall stand. Such has been the Character of some of the Saints in ancient Ages of the World, such in the elder and latter Days of *Christianity*: The Brightness and Savour of their good Name abides to this Day amongst us, as an Ornament to Religion, and a rich Perfume to the Gospel of our Lord Jesus. *To him be Glory and Dominion for ever and ever. Amen.*





## SERMON XXXI.

Holy Fortitude, or Remedies against  
Fear.

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I COR. xvi. 13.

—*Stand fast in the Faith, quit you like Men,  
be strong.*

**I**N the first Ages of Christianity, the Professors of the Gospel had great need of *divine Courage*, that they might stand the many Shocks of Opposition, Reproach, and Violence. The *Corinthian Heathens*, though they were a polite and learned People, yet they were blind and obstinate in their own Superstitions and Idolatry, and rooted in the profane and vicious Customs of their Ancestors. It required a large Stock of holy Fortitude, to profess and practise a new Religion among them, that ran counter to all their former Opinions, and their Manners. Therefore St. Paul, who planted the Gospel in that City, calls upon his Converts to shake off Cowardise and Fear, to *stand firm* and unmov'd in the Profession of their Faith, to *behave like Men of War*, like *Heroes*, in the Practice of Christianity, and to exert all their *Strength* of Soul in this glorious Work. *Stand fast in the Faith, quit you like Men, be strong.*

'Tis

'Tis true, we live not in a *Heathen* Country, among lewd and barbarous Superstitions: The Land where our Lot is cast, is honoured with the *Christian* Name, and professes the Religion of *Jesus*; yet let me tell you, *Infidelity* is a growing Temptation of this Age, the Gospel of *Christ* hath plentiful Ridicule thrown upon it, by many of our Neighbours that go under the Name of Christians; and we may sometimes be called to put on Courage for the Defence of this Gospel.

But besides this, there are many Things occurring in the divine Life, that require us to put on this holy Fortitude of Soul. The very Nature of Men is so corrupt and vicious, their Hearts are so averse to the holy Precepts of Christianity, the Multitude of Sinners is so exceeding great in every Nation, even where the Gospel is professed, the Customs of this World are so contrary to the Rules of the Gospel, and the Malice and Rage of *Satan* with his evil Angels, is so constant and so violent against the Religion and the Name of *Christ*, that 'tis true at all Times (as well as in the primitive Age) *that all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer Persecution*, 2 Tim. iii. 12. When we become *Soldiers of Christ*, and resolve to be religious in good earnest, we must reckon upon Enemies and Oppositions, we must be prepared to *endure Hardness*, chap. ii. ver. 3.

Our Business therefore is, to seek for a *Spirit of Power* and holy *Fortitude*, that we may be void of *Fear* in the Profession of our Faith, and in the Practice of our daily Duties. Not the *Corinthians* only, but we also, must *watch, and stand fast in the Faith, we must quit our selves like Men, and be strong*. If we are frighted at the Sound of every Reproach, or terrify'd by the fierce Opposition of a wicked World, we shall be in danger of turning back from the Paths of Christianity, and of losing the heavenly Prize. Such Doctrines, and such Practices of the Gospel teaches, require the Professors of them to be bold and valiant.

And

And besides the Difficulties we shall meet with from a degenerate and sinful World, there are many other Trials that attend the Christian Life. Sorrows and Sufferings belong to human Nature, in this fallen and unhappy State : *Man is born to Trouble as the Sparks fly upwards* : This Earth is design'd for a Stage of Conflict, a Scene of Probation, where each of us must act our Parts, under the Eye and Notice of God our supreme Governór, and our final Rewarder. He expects that we should put on a sacred Hardiness of Soul ; he requires that we should not indulge a *Spirit of Fear*, but be armed with *Power and Courage*, that we may endure to the End. And blessed be his Name that he hath given us Promises to raise our Hope, that as he endued his People in ancient Times with his Grace, so he will bestow this Spirit of *holy Fortitude* upon us also, and that *as our Day is, so our Strength shall be*.

To cast my Discourse into some Method, I shall *First* briefly describe this divine Temper of Mind. In the *next* Place, I would represent the various *Occasions* which we shall find for the Exercise of it.

*Thirdly*, I shall mention a few *Motives* to incite us to acquire this *holy Fortitude*, and to maintain it throughout our whole Course of Life.

And *Fourthly*, Propose some *Remedies* against a *Spirit of Slavish Fear*, which is directly opposite to this Christian Virtue.

The *first* Thing proposed is, to describe *what I mean by holy Fortitude and Courage* ; and to this End, we must distinguish it into that of the *Active* and that of the *Passive* Kind.

*Active Valour* or *Courage*, is such a Temper of Soul, as enables us to attempt and venture upon any bold Act of Duty, which may endanger our present Ease, and worldly Interest ; and prompts us to pur-  
sue



sue it with a becoming Steadiness and Bravery of Mind, undaunted at every Opposition we meet with, and untterrify'd at all the threatenng Dangers that stand in our Way.

*Passive Valour* is such an habitual Firmness and Constancy of Soul, as enables us to bear what Sufferings we fall under, without Repinings and inward Vexations, and without any outward Tokens of Sinking or Despondency. When we sustain heavy Sorrows, or Anguish of the Flesh, without any wild and unreasonable Groanings of Nature, without Rage and unbecoming Resentment, without Tumult and Confusion of Spirit. And this should be the Temper of our Souls, and our Christian Conduct, whether the Sufferings which we feel, arise from the immediate Hand of God, or from the Injustice and Violence of Men.

In the *Second Place*, I come to represent *the various Occasions that we shall find in the Christian Life, for the Exercise of this holy Courage*, and that under both Kinds of it; (*viz.*) the *Active* and the *Passive*, or that which consists in doing, and that which consists in suffering; and I shall enlarge upon each of them in a practical way.

*Active Valour* is necessary for a Professor of the Christian Faith: and when and wheresoever divine Providence gives us any just Occasions for the Exercise of this sort of Fortitude, let no Christian refuse them, or shamefully withdraw from his Duty. The Occasions we may have for it are such as these;

I. *When we are called to profess and practise strict Piety, even under the special View and Notice of profane Sinners.* Perhaps our Dwelling may be cast among profligate Wretches, who live without God in the World; but we must not be afraid to own, that we fear the great God, and that we worship that awful Name, which their Blasphemies affront and vilify. Nor must we be ashamed to let the World know,  
that

that we cannot pass a Day without calling upon our God, and that Prayer is as necessary to us as our daily Food. 'Tis strange and monstrous that it should ever be accounted a *Matter of Shame* among Creatures to acknowledge the God that made them, or that it should ever need any *Courage* to profess Homage and Adoration to our Creator! What degenerate Times do we live in, that it should *require some Fortitude* to tell the World, that we who are *Creatures* confess a *God*! And yet sometimes even this very *Fortitude* is wanting, and we are contented to look like *Atheists*, lest we should be thought *religious*. Base Cowardise! and degenerate Times indeed!

II. *When we happen into the Company of Infidels and Apostates from Christianity, who throw their impious Jest*s on the Gospel of Christ, we may find a plain Call of Providence to stand up for his Name and Honour.

'Tis true, there are few of us who are sent to travel beyond the Seas, and to engage in necessary Converse about Religion with *Heathens*; but I hinted before, that *Infidelity* is a growing Mischief of the present Age, even in our own Land. It seems to be a spreading Infection, and how far the great God may suffer it to prevail, he only knows. There are Multitudes already that *have made Shipwreck of the Faith of Christ*, and betake themselves only to the dim and glimmering Light of Nature, as a sufficient Refuge for their Souls, and their only Guide in the Matters of Religion: A poor doubtful Guide, and a dangerous Refuge! And yet these Men are continually instructing one another to wage War against the blessed Gospel, and rise in Arms of Defiance against the only Saviour. 'Tis proper then for us to enquire, Are we ready to declare our selves *Christians* if we are called to it, when *Deists* and *Scoffers* surround us with their abominable Jest, or their

their wanton Cavils? For tho' sometimes they argue against our Creed with Calmness and Decency, yet it must be confessed that those are the most common Weapons which this sort of Men make use of. Dare we now make a Profession of our Faith among Men of Infidelity, and not value their Banter, and their insolent Reproaches? Let us remember, that Christian Courage must encounter Mockery and Slanders as well as other Terrors: Courage must guard us against sinful *Shame*, as well as against sinful *Fear*. Can we glory in a *crucify'd* Saviour as the *Wisdom and the Power of God*, if we should be placed between the *Jews* on one side, and the *Heathens* on the other, who load this Doctrine with Folly and Scandal. *St. Paul* was a brave Example. O that every Soul of us could as bravely imitate him! But let us proceed to some more Occasions of Courage a-kin to this.

Perhaps we content our selves to be *Christians* in our Closets, and to frequent the publick Assemblies of Worship without Shame or Fear, because our Neighbours do the same: But I would enquire of such *general Professors* of Christianity, Why are you so backward to give up your Names to Christ, and attend on the special Ordinance of his holy Supper? Is it not because you are ashamed to appear in such a strict Profession of Godliness, and to be known and observed by the World, as those that have devoted themselves to the Lord in his Church? This is certainly the Case of some younger Converts. Let them here be put in mind of their former Neglects, and their present Duty. *Be strong in the Lord*, banish a sinful Shame, and seal your Covenant in the Blood of *Christ*. His Cross is your Hope, and why should you not make it your Glory too?

If you are ashamed of such a publick Profession in peaceful Times, what will ye do if Days of Trial should come? Would you be ready to vindicate your Separation from the Church of *Rome*, and all  
its

its superstitions? Would you have Courage enough to maintain the Purity of your Profession, and your close Adherence to Scripture, in Opposition to all the Inventions and Traditions of Men? Would your Heart be strong to persist in your peculiar Practices of Religion, in the most scriptural Forms of it, in an Hour of Persecution and Danger? Blessed be God for a *Protestant King* on the Throne, and a glorious Race of *Protestant Princes* to succeed him. May the Blessings of Heaven from above descend on them all, and render them in their Successions an everlasting Blessing to *Great Britain* and all the Protestant Churches! But a *Christian* indeed should be so formed, and so furnished, as to be ready to profess and practise his Religion in every Nation, and in every Age, in the midst of Storms as well as under the shining Sun.

III. *When we are called to practise an unfashionable Virtue, or to refuse Compliance with any fashionable Vice.* This is another Occasion that demands the Exercise of *Christian Fortitude*.

Let us survey a few Instances of this Kind.

'Tis an unfashionable Thing now-adays to introduce a Word of practical Godliness into Company: The polite World will tell us, It spoils Conversation: Mark, what a Silence is spread over the Room, when any Person dares to begin so disagreeable a Subject; there's none to second him, he may preach alone, and 'tis well if he escapes a profane Scoff. This is a very true, but a very shameful Account of Things, according to the present Mode. Any thing but Religion is thought fit to entertain a Friend. Even where Persons of Piety meet together in their Visits, this sort of Language is banish'd from Company and the Parlour, and 'tis confin'd only to God and the Closet. Alas! we are ashamed to appear truly religious; but if we had holy Courage enough, one Person would not be afraid to begin, nor another



ther to carry on such divine Discourse. There are surely some happy Moments wherein an useful Word may be introduced with Prudence and Decency, to warme each other's Hearts, and to rekindle the holy Fire of Love and Devotion that is almost expiring.

Again, Perhaps we may be much engaged in the World among Persons that make no Conscience of speaking Truth: But if we would be Christians indeed, we must have Courage enough always to shew a Hatred of Falshood, and keep up a Tenderness of Spirit, lest we be drawn to the Borders of a Lye; nor must we be ashamed to let the World know that we are the devoted Servants of Truth.

When some knavish or unjust Practice has overspread a City or a Country, and become almost universal, we must dare to be honest in a cheating World; we must maintain our Righteousness, and let it shine in the midst of a deceitful Age, though, perhaps, we may be called *scrupulous Fools*.

If we happen to be engaged in necessary Business with Persons who drink to Excess, we must boldly deny the imposed Glasse, we must secure our own Sobriety, even in the midst of Drunkards, and as much as possible avoid their Society: Nor should any scandalous Names of *Puritan* and *Precisian* affright us from the Paths of strict Holiness.

When we meet with gross Affronts in the World, we may be made the Scorn and Jest of all the Company, if we decline the modish Customs of *Satisfaction* and *bloody Revenge*; we may be charged with Cowardise among the *Russians* of the Age; but a Man of Honour must have Courage to bear this Charge, unless he will venture to run upon the Sword of God, which is drawn and pointed against *Revenge*, *Duelling*, and *Murder*.

When the Fashion of Dress or Visits, of Salutations or Entertainments, exceed the Bounds of Modesty or Temperance, or intrenches upon Truth or Religion, we must bravely dare to be *unfashionable*,  
and

and have *no Fellowship with any unfruitful Works of Darknefs*. We must obey the great and holy God, rather than comply with the sinful Customs of Men,

*'Tis brave to meet the World, stand fast among  
Whole Crowds, and not be carried with the Throng.*

I grant that Religion doth not consist in *Singularity*, but there are some Seasons when we must be *singular*; if we would be *holy*, and exert a sacred Fortitude of Soul, to secure our selves from the Defilements of the World. *Come out from among them* is the Language of God in such Cases, *touch not the unclean Thing, and be ye separate, saith the Lord*, 2 Cor. vi. 17.

IV. Another Instance of necessary Courage, is, *when we are called to undertake the Cause of the Oppressed, to plead for the Poor against the Mighty, or to vindicate the Innocent against the Men of Slander or Violence*. It is a cowardly Spirit, a Spirit of shameful Pride, or selfish Meanness, to trample upon those that are lying upon the Ground, to tread upon the Poor and the Distressed, and sometimes through Fear of the Mighty, as well as Scorn of the Poor, to neglect the Cries of those that are injur'd. This indeed is the Custom of the World; but if we be Disciples of *Christ*, we must have more Courage than this, we must *open our Mouths for the Dumb*, and plead the Cause of those that cannot speak for themselves, *Prov. xxxi. 8*.

When we happen into Company that delight in Scandal, and the Slander goes round from Tongue to Tongue, we must first guard our Lips from the infamous Compliance, tho' we cannot defend our Ears: And then we should have some Compassion on the absent Person, who perhaps may be loaded with Calumny and Lyes: Nor should we be afraid or asham'd to put in a relieving Word; to support  
the

the good Name of those that are oppressed by malicious Reproaches. And if the Censure be never so just, yet where Providence doth not plainly call us to join in that Censure, let us not betray such an Inclination to Evil-speaking, nor shew such a base and mean Soul, as to call Names for Company.

Where the Life or the Estate of our Neighbour is in danger, we must venture something to secure it, as well as to defend his good Name. This Advice is given in *Prov. xxiv. 11, 12. If thou forbear to deliver them that are drawn out to Death, and those that are ready to be slain; if thou say'st behold we knew it not, doth not he that pondereth the Heart consider?* That is, if there are any Persons drawn out to Death, and ready to be slain by sinful Oppression, and that thou hast a just and reasonable Power in thine Hand to preserve them, it is not thy Duty to stand still or hide thy self, and say, *Behold I knew it not.* He that lets the Ox or the Ass of his Neighbour go astray, or sink under a Burden, and passeth away regardless as though he did not know it, is under the Censure of the Word of God; and much more do we deserve the Censure, if we abandon our Fellow-Creatures of human Nature to perish, when we are able to save them. The all-wise and almighty God considers it, and he will not approve of such *Meanness of Spirit*, and such a shameful Defect of Christian Courage and Charity.

V. 'Tis a Work which calls for Courage to admonish our Brethren when they depart from the Ways of Righteousness, and to reprove Sin among those with whom we converse. The Law of God requires it, *Lev. xix. 17. Thou shalt not hate thy Brother in thy Heart; thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy Neighbour, and not suffer Sin upon him.* It is express as though a Neglect of Reproof, where it is a Duty, looks like a sort of Hatred, or want of Love. But for the most Part, 'tis want of Courage forbids it. Let it be done with holy

Boldness; but without Wrath and Resentment, or selfish Revenge; let it be express'd and manag'd with all Love and Gentleness, with all Humility and Compassion, and with a becoming Exercise of those lovely Characters of Moderation and Meekness, which I have elsewhere described.

*Nathan* the Prophet ingeniously reprov'd *David* the King for his Adultery and Murder. And we should learn the most artful and obliging Methods, and the softest Language of Reproof, that we may practise it with more Courage, Security, and Success; and the more secret it is, it will generally be most successful.

If at any time we are called by most evident Providence, to give an open Rebuke in the Face of the World, together with Courage, we must put on all Wisdom and Humility, lest we publish our own Conceit and Pride, and provoke Wrath without Hope of Success. When we rebuke the profane and impious Wretch, for the most glaring Iniquity, we should use our best Prudence in distinguishing proper Seasons, lest we cast a Pearl before Swine, and it become useless, and be trodden under Foot, *Mat. vii. 6.*

Sometimes 'tis hard to know what is our Duty in this Respect, but thus far in general it may be said, *This should be done whensoever there is a great and evident Probability of doing Service to God and Souls by it: Whensoever a Vindication of the Name of God, and his Honour requires it, or when there is any just Hope of doing Good to Men; there is indeed a Time to keep silence in this Case, and there is a Time to speak.* O may the Word, and Spirit, and Providence of God join together to give us Direction in this difficult Duty, and Courage to perform it!

VI. *Reformation of all kinds, whether in Families or Churches, in Cities or Nations, demands a good Degree of Resolution and Courage.*

'Tis



'Tis a brave and daring Enterprize, to stem the Torrent of the Age we live in, and to attempt to change the *vicious Customs of a City or a Nation*. We must have a Soul inspired with Zeal for Piety and Goodness, if we would contest the Point with the Guilty, and cover them with deserved Shame, or bring them to deserved Punishment. Blessed be God, there are Societies formed in our Age for this glorious Purpose! May everlasting Success attend their Zeal, and may their Heads be covered with divine Protection in every Hour of Danger!

We have need of Courage to stand up for Truth and Purity in the *Church of Christ*, when it is overrun with *corrupt Doctrines, wicked Heresies, Superstitions, and false Worship*. We must use our Endeavour to root out these evil Weeds by all the sacred Influences of Reason and Scripture; not by Rage and Violence, not by Fraud and Falshood, not by Slander and scandalous Language, not by calling in the Power of the Magistrate and the Sword of the State to assist us; *Christ* hath not allowed his Followers such Weapons as these against Superstition and Heresy: *The Sword of the Spirit is the Word of God. The Weapons of our Warfare are not carnal.*

And when we have endeavoured to reform the Offenders by all Christian Methods, and find no Success, we must dare to separate our selves from the *Many* and the *Mighty*, who will not be reformed. This was the glorious Practice of our Fathers, the *Protestants* and the *Puritans*, in the several Seasons of their Reformation, when they were called to oppose the greater or the lesser Corruptions of the Christian Church.

If our *Kindred or Families* are fallen into any *foolish, vain, or sinful Practices*, or any *Civil Society* to which we belong hath departed from the *Rules of Justice or Truth*, it belongs to a Christian to become a publick Good, by using his Influence, as far as it goes, toward the rectifying of every Disorder. He Should

put on a divine Fortitude, whensoever Providence calls him to attempt a Reformation amongst them.

There is need of a noble Spirit and a pious Bravery, to rise up against any foolish or vicious Customs, to combat any rooted Principles or Habits of Error or Iniquity, and to oppose any Number of Persons that are engaged in an evil Course. *Moses* forbids us to follow a Multitude to do Evil, *Exod. xxiii. 2.* And there are Seasons when we may be called to oppose a Multitude of Evil-doers: and tho' no Man stand by us, yet we are bound to stand by the Cause of God and Goodness. So divine a Cause deserves and demands such divine Courage.

How glorious was the Character of *Caleb* and *Joshua*, who spoke well of the Land of Promise, and encouraged the Armies of *Israel*, while all the rest of the Spies which were sent brought an evil Report upon the good Land! *Numb. xiii. 31, 32.* The People believed the evil Report, and spoke of stoning *Joshua* and *Caleb*: But the Glory of the Lord appeared in the Tabernacle, and God himself gave a Testimony from Heaven to the sacred Courage and Honour of these Jewish Heroes. What a brave Spirit dwelt in *Elijah*, who attempted to reform *Israel* from Idolatry! He would not fall down and worship *Baal*, though he thought he had been left alone, the only Worshipper of the true God, in the Nation, *1 Kings xix. 14.*

VII. There are some other, and very common Occasions for the Exercise of sacred Courage, which attend Persons, especially in the lower Ranks of Life: As for Instance; When a Servant is called by Providence to speak the Truth, and yet he dare not do it without offending his Master: When a poor Man is required to bear Witness in some important Concern, and his rich Neighbour frowns and looks sour upon him: When a Person of an inferior Character

racter is tempted to join with the Mighty in some unjust and dishonourable Practices, and while his Superiors invite him to it, his Conscience forbids his Compliance. 'Tis a noble Act of Christian Courage, in such Instances as these, to follow Truth, Equity, and Conscience, wheresoever they lead, in Opposition to all the Allurements, the Frowns, and the Threatnings of Persons in an higher Station. Let those who fall under such a Temptation remember, *there is an higher than the highest*, and the great God, the Lord of Heaven and Earth, is the Patron of Truth and Righteousness, the Guardian of Innocence, and the dreadful Avenger of Deceit and Lying.

I might add other Instances of a kindred Nature in common Life, wherein *Christian Fortitude* is greatly necessary, especially in this corrupt and degenerate Age: As when a Trader must look Poverty in the Face, and meet approaching Ruin in his outward Circumstances, unless he make some Inroad upon his Honesty, and practise Falshood and Deceit. But if the Case be thus, if a *Christian* sees himself sinking in the World, by the Frowns of Providence, he must dare to sink rather than cheat his Neighbour, and save himself by any base and dishonest Methods. A Man of Religion and Honour must stand firm to his Word, must follow strict Equity in all Things, and neither enter into any Methods of Fraud, nor of Violence, to retrieve his decaying Circumstances.

O how many little knavish Contrivances do Persons often practise to secure a good Bargain to themselves, and sometimes they support their dying Credit in the World at the Expence and Loss of their innocent Neighbour! They borrow what they know they are not able to pay: They draw up false Accounts of their own Estate: They impose upon the Credulous with Words of a double Meaning, or with downright Lyes: They almost forget they are *Christians*, for fear lest they should be undone, and practise the Things at which an *Heathen* would have

blush'd and started, because they have not Courage enough to be *honest and poor*.

VIII. Christians have need of holy Fortitude, to *venture their Lives at the Demand of Providence, and expose themselves to Violence, and to a bloody Death*. Sometimes they are called to this glorious Service in the *Cause of God and his Church*: So were many of the Prophets, the Apostles, and primitive Christians, as well as the Martyrs of later Ages. Sometimes in the *Cause of our Country*, divine Providence calls us to expose our Blood, and to assist or guard the Nation against Invasions from Abroad, or Tumults at Home, and to quell the Rage of a brutal Multitude. In a just and necessary War for our Country, or in Defence of our natural or religious Rights, we may fight with Christian Courage, when we have well survey'd the Justice of our Cause, and find it approved of God. And there are Seasons when we may be called to venture our Lives for our Christian Brethren, 1 John iii. 15.

But, perhaps, some of these Things may come as naturally also under the Head of *passive Valour and Courage*: And indeed the most *active Valour* of the greatest Heroes is built upon that which is *passive*. 'Tis on this Account they dare venture to expose their Flesh to Wounds, their Names to Reproach, or their Bodies to Death, because they can bear the Wounds, the Reproaches, or Death itself with a noble Serenity and Fortitude of Soul. All the active Boldness in the World is but *Rashness and Folly* where such a Hardiness and Patience are utterly wanting.

Of this *passive Valour* I shall mention but two particular Cases wherein Christians must exert themselves.

I. *When we are called to bear Sickness, Pain, Shame, Losses, Disappointments, all the sorrowful Changes of Life,*



*Life, or Death itself from the meer Hand of God.* This is to be done with a Steadiness of Spirit, with a Firmness of Soul, with Christian Fortitude, with a sacred and serene Calm upon all our Powers and Passions, without fretting or vexing, or inward Disquietude. It is a Sign of a weak Mind to be overset with every Blast of Wind. *If thou faintest in the Day of Adversity, thy Strength is but small,* Prov. xxiv. 10. We must not indeed despise the Chastening of the Almighty, nor must we faint when we are rebuked of him, Heb. xii. 5.

Let the Men of this World that know not *Christ*, that are not acquainted with the Gospel, and have not felt the Powers of the World to come, let them fret and grow peevish at every Disappointment that falls upon them in their earthly Comforts, or when their Flesh is visited with sore Pains: But it does not become a *Christian* to be sour and fretful under the afflicting Hand of God, for 'tis the Hand of his heavenly Father. To be overwhelmed and almost distracted with the Crosses we meet with in the World, is not becoming the Character of a Child of God, one that is high-born, that has his Birth from Heaven, and his Family there; it is a Shame for him to grow wild with Impatience, or to run into desperate Courses for Relief. This is not *Courage*, but meer *Cowardise of Soul*, to put an End to our own Life in order to escape from our Sorrows. The wisest among the *Heathens* reproved it as a *Meanness of Spirit*; and surely it is much more unbecoming the Religion of *Christ*, and that divine Fortitude that every Christian should be endued with. We are not to be affrighted *though the Mountains should be turned upside down, and cast into the midst of the Sea: The Lord of Hosts is our Shield and Defence, he is a Rock above all the Waves, and if our Feet are fixed upon this Rock, what need have we for Terror?* The Name of the *God of Jacob*, in the xlv<sup>th</sup> Psalm, is a Match for all our Foes, and a sovereign Remedy for all our Fears.

*Christian Courage* appears also upon a *Bed of Sickness*, when at the Call of God, we look *Death in the Face* with a chearful Soul. When all our Friends stand around us, and every one, by the lamentable Air that sits in their Faces, gives us notice of our approaching Dissolution, then to look upon Death with a serene Countenance, and not be affrighted, but venture boldly into the invisible World; this is a glorious *Fortitude* derived from the Grace of Faith.

II. Another Instance of *passive Valour* is, when we bear *Persecutions of all sorts from the hands of Men with a holy Courage, for the sake of God*. When we can be plundered of our Possessions in this World, and stript of all our Comforts, and yet be easy. *Ye took joyfully the Spoiling of your Goods*, says the Apostle to the *Hebrews*, chap. x. ver. 32, 34. *and ye endured a great fight of Afflictions with Chearfulness, knowing that in Heaven ye have a better and more enduring Substance*. In *Heb. xi. ver. 36*. when the Apostle speaks of the ancient *Jewish Saints*, *they had Trial of cruel Mockings and Scourgings, of Bonds and Imprisonments, they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the Sword; they wandered about in Sheep Skins and Goat Skins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented; but they were Men above this World, of whom the World was not worthy: They had a Spirit of divine Courage that made them too great for this World, although they were almost banish'd out of it, and wandered among the Beasts of the Earth. Let not Christians then be guilty of base and mean Compliances, to preserve their Substance in the World, nor to cover their Names from Slanders and Infamy, nor to secure their Liberties or their Lives when Christ calls us to part with them. If there be any Virtue, if there be any Praise, think on these Things. If there be any Call to the Practice of such Courage, for the Sake of Christ, remember these Exhortations and be not afraid.*

Thus

Thus I have given you a Variety of Instances both of *active* and *passive Valour*, as they are to be exercised in the Christian Life: I fear they are too many for the best and boldest of us to practise, even under all our Advantages. But in order to render them a little more easy to Christians, the following *Motives* and *Directions* may give some Assistance under the Influence of the blessed Spirit. And these shall be the Subject of the next Discourse.

### THE RECOLLECTION.

And now, O my Soul, 'tis Time to turn thy Thoughts inward, and enquire, How much of this Discourse is suited to thy own Case? Thou acknowledgest *there is a God*, but art thou not sometimes ashamed to call upon him in the Morning for his Presence all the Day, lest thy Companions should know thou hast been upon thy Knees? Hast thou Courage to ask a Blessing on thy Food in the Place where others deride the Practice?

Thou hast learnt and thou hast believed the Religion of *Christ*, but hast thou ever yet had Courage enough to make a solemn and publick Profession of it? Hast thou ever yet publicly given thy Name up to *Christ* as one of his Subjects, and join'd thy self to his visible Kingdom amongst Men? Or art thou only a Believer in secret, ashamed to make Profession of thy Faith, by joining thy self to some Christian Assembly? If this be thy State, thou hast now a loud Call to *add Fortitude to thy Faith*, and assume Christian Courage to profess the sacred Name in which thou hast believed.

Or art thou a Professor of this holy Religion? Thou hast listed thy self under the Banner of *Christ*, in these Days of Liberty and Peace, and while thou dwellest among those who encourage thy Faith and Profession. But enquire into thy self, Hast thou such a Love to the Gospel, as to glory in it even amongst

amongst Infidels, who make it the Object of their Mockery and Reproach? Has this divine Religion so deep a Root in thy Heart, as to bear and resist the Storms of the World, and to stand firm and flourish still? Hast thou Courage to declare thy self a Disciple of the Cross, and a Professor of a crucify'd Saviour, when thou shalt happen to be in the Company of those who blaspheme him.

Hast thou obtain'd holy Boldness enough to practise Virtue when it is out of Fashion, and canst thou refuse to comply with the warmest Temptations to a fashionable Sin? Hast thou got such a Victory over thy self as to dare to be singular, if thy Company would lead thee into any modish Vice? This is an hard Lesson to young and tender Minds, but it must be learnt, O my Soul, if thou wilt be a Christian indeed.

Hast thou Courage to vindicate the Innocent, when he is assaulted with Slanders, and to frown upon those who delight in Scandal? Or art thou so meanly Spirited, as to join in a common Jest, that is thrown upon the Absent, and to mix with the odious Tribe of Backbiters? Remember this is a shameful Baseness of Spirit; but a Christian must be a Man of Honour.

Canst thou see thy Friends, thy Companions, indulge a sinful Course, and hast not thou one kind Admonition for them? Hast thou not Virtue and Courage enough to warn thy Brother, and to turn his Foot from the Paths of Iniquity, that leads to Ruin and Death? But remember also, that Gentleness and Love must attend thy Rebukes, if thou ever desirest they should attain Success. A Reprover should have a bold, but a tender Spirit.

What Zeal hast thou, O my Soul, for Reformation? Or canst thou bear with Immoralities and Corruptions of every Kind? And rather than venture to displease Man, wilt thou let thy Neighbours go on for ever to displease God?

What



What wouldst thou do, if thou wert called to face the great, and to profess Religion before the mighty Men of the Earth? Is thy Faith grown bold enough to shew itself in a Court, in a Palace, and to venture all thy earthly Interests for the Defence of it?

Thus far concerning thy *active Fortitude*. But how stands the Case with Regard to *passive Valour*, and enduring of Sufferings? Is thy Heart firm under sharp Trials of Providence? Canst thou resign thy Health and thy Ease into the Hand of God without fretting and repining? Or doth thy Courage faint, and thy Impatience shamefully discover itself under the common Pains and Diseases of Nature? I grant, there is much of Weakness derived even to a manly Spirit, from the Distempers of the Flesh: When the Nerves are unbraced, and the Tabernacle of the Body tottering, the Soul partakes of the Infirmities of this poor fleshly Engine. O frail unhappy State of human Nature, and Souls that dwell in Clay! But is it thy constant Labour and Prayer, that Patience may have its perfect Work, that thy Spirit may be ever sedate under all the Pains and Disquietudes of this mortal Flesh, and thy Temper kept serene under all the Frowns and Clouds of Heaven?

Art thou ready to face the King of Terrors, and to descend into that dark Valley? Thou must meet this Adversary shortly, O my Soul: Labour therefore daily to get Courage and Victory over Death, by Faith in a dying and a rising Saviour.

Happy is that Faith that has no carnal Fear attending it, but is got above the Frowns and Smiles of this World. My Soul longs after it, and reaches at it, as something within the Power of her present Attainment through the Grace of Christ. I long to be armed with this sacred Courage, and to have my Heart fortify'd all round with these divine Munitions.

Munitions. I would fain be calm and serene in the midst of Buffetings and Reproaches, and pursue my Course steadily toward Heaven, under the Banner of Faith, through all the Arrows of Slander and Malice. Lord *Jesus*, I wait for thy divine Influences, to bestow this Grace, and thy divine Teachings, to put me in the Way to obtain it,





## SERMON XXXII.

Holy Fortitude, or Remedies against Fear.

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I COR. xvi. 13.

—Stand fast in the Faith, quit you like Men, be strong.

HAVING described this holy Temper of Spirit, this *Fortitude* both of the *active* and *passive* Kind, and having set before you *various Occasions* for its Exercise in the Christian Life, I proceed now to the *third* Thing which I proposed, and that is, to excite you by some *engaging Motives*, to seek after this Temper, which is so necessary for a Christian.

I shall not enforce this from the Light of Nature, and from the meer Laws of Reason, which have been joined with ambitious and selfish Principles in some of the *Pagan* Heroes, and have influenced many a Man, in the Days of *Heathenism*, to some great Exploits of Fortitude and Fame. There is nothing in all the Dictates of Reason, nothing in all the Principles of Natural Religion, that makes the Mind brave and noble, but it receives high Advancements and glorious Efficacy from Christianity.

I would

I would call you, *First*, to cast your Eyes on the noble Patterns of Courage that you find in the New Testament. I don't invite you to meditate the Examples of *Heathen Warriors*, but consider the Example of *Christian Heroes*, your Predecessors, who have stood fast in the Faith, who have quitted themselves like Men, in numerous and shining Instances of *active* and *passive* Courage. Look at the blessed Apostles, Peter and John, when they rejoiced to suffer Shame for the Sake of Christ their Lord, and boldly told the Council of Priests, that they must preach the Name of Jesus, in Opposition to their Menaces: They must obey God rather than Men. Look at St. Paul the most eminent Christian Heroe: Behold him in the Midst of the Roman Soldiers, and a violent Multitude of unbelieving Jews. Hear how he acknowledges his exalted Saviour before Captains and Centurions, before King Agrippa, before Felix and Festus, who were two successive Governors of Judea: and with the same Fortitude of Soul he appear'd before Cesar, at Rome. *I am not ashamed*, says he, *of the Gospel of Christ*, for he whom I have trusted in is almighty to support me. Read that most generous and pathetick Speech of his, *Acts xxi. 13.* when the Spirit of Prophecy had foretold that Paul should be bound at Jerusalem, and delivered Captive into the Hands of the Gentiles; his Friends and Strangers besought him not to go up to that City. Then Paul answered, *What mean ye to weep, and to break mine Heart? For I am ready, not to be bound only, but also to dye at Jerusalem for the Name of the Lord Jesus.* I know (says he) and the Holy Ghost is witness, that Bonds and Afflictions wait for me, but none of these things move me, neither count I my Life dear to myself, that I may finish my Course with Joy, and the Ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the Gospel of the Grace of God, *Acts xx. 24.*

Now when a special Occasion calls us to the Exercise of this Virtue, and to confess Christ before the



the World, for us to be mealy-mouth'd, and baffled, and frighted at the Countenances of Men, this is to forsake the Example of the blessed Apostles, and *obey Men rather than God*. The Prophets and the Apostles, the antient Saints and the primitive Martyrs have given us noble Patterns of this Virtue; and why should our Spirits fail us, or our Lips tremble, if we are called to the same glorious Confession? Is not our Religion divine? Is not the Gospel still worthy of the same Honour? Is not our God the same Almighty? Is not our Redeemer the same Jesus? And does not a dying, a rising, and a reigning Saviour deserve the same Homage of our Tongues, and demand the same Glory at our Hands?

Yes surely, he demands it of us, and he deserves it infinitely: And not only his Apostles, but his own Example teaches us to practise this Fortitude, both of the *active* and the *passive* Kind.

In the *Second Place* then, *behold this Perfect Pattern of Fortitude*, Jesus the Son of God: When he came into the World in the midst of Poverty, and made but a mean Figure, as the Son of a Carpenter, he was called to oppose the whole Nation of the *Jews*, and the Priests and Princes of *Jerusalem*; he was sent to reform the vicious Customs of a wicked and degenerate Age. How did he stand and face Danger without Fear! When he went into the Temple, with what a sacred Zeal did he scourge the Buyers and Sellers out of his Father's House of Prayer! Ye know what a noble Testimony he bare to the Truth, when he was called before the great Men, the Rulers of the Church and State. You know, again, what Instances of *passive* Courage our Lord Jesus manifested, when he was hatefully reproached, and suffered shameful Indignities from a rude Multitude: When he was persecuted, when he was buffeted, when he wrestled with many and mighty Sorrows, when his Friends left him alone in the Hands of his cruel Enemies. It

It must be confessed, his Spirit trembled within him, and he was *sore amazed*, when *it pleased* his Father to *bruise him*, and *put him to Grief*, and to *make his Soul an Offering for Sin*. These were unknown and inexpressible Burdens, that made him groan indeed, and *offer strong Cries and Tears* to Heaven, that that Cup of Terror might pass from him. If ever his Courage seem'd to fail him, 'twas in that Agony in the Garden, when he endured more than any meer Man could bear. A formidable, and a dismal Hour, when the Father hid his Face from him, and the Powers of Darkness fell upon him with angelick Might and Fury! But these are Sorrows of Atonement, which the Saints are never called to suffer. And yet by secret divine Supports, *Jesus* endured all these Agonies, and upon the Cross he triumphed not only over the Malice of Men, but *over Principalities and Powers of Hell*, and *made an open shew of them*, perhaps, before Armies of the invisible World, and Millions of applauding Angels, *Col. ii. 15.*

Read the sacred Advice, *Heb. xii. 1, 2.* Not only look ye, says the Apostle, to the *great Cloud of Witnesses* that are gone before, but above all look to *Jesus, the Author and Finisher of your Faith, who, for the Joy that was set before him, endured the Cross, and despised the Shame, and is set down at the Right Hand of the Throne of God. Consider him that endured such Contradiction of Sinners against himself, that opposed a Multitude, a Legion, a World of Sinners, lest ye be weary and faint in your Minds*, nor let your Spirits sink, while you behold his divine Fortitude: Let such an illustrious Scene animate your Souls, and inspire the fainting Believer with new Courage.

Consider, *Thirdly*, what you are; If you are *Christians*, ye are *Soldiers of Christ*, ye have already enter'd the Lists with all the Powers of Hell, and are ye afraid of Man that is a Worm, and the Son of Man that is a Worm? Ye have ranged your selves under the Banner of the Redeemer, and the Redeemer's

deemer's Army must fight against all the Armies of Darkness and their Allies. Ye have set up to oppose *Sin* and *Satan*, two powerful Enemies; and are ye afraid to be brow-beaten by a Fellow-Worm, one who is weak and mortal like your selves?

Consider, *Fourthly*, If ye are Christians, what Promises of the divine Presence and Help you have in the Bible, and when the mighty God has given such divine Encouragement, he chides his People into Courage; *I even I am he that comforteth thee; Who art thou that thou shouldest be afraid of a Man that shall die, and of the Son of Man which shall be made as Grass, and forgettest the Lord thy Maker, that hath stretched forth the Heavens, and laid the Foundations of the Earth, and hast feared continually every Day because of the Fury of the Oppressor, as if he were ready to destroy? And where is the Fury of the Oppressor?* Isa. xl. 51. A generous and divine Cordial to keep the Soul from fainting! The Presence of God is an effectual Support. St. Paul found it so; *for when all Men forsook him, the Lord stood by and strengthened him,* 1 Tim. iv. 16; 17. Alas! we are poor feeble trembling Soldiers, our Hands hang down, and our Faces gather Paleness: But we dare to confront the Terrors of this World, if we taste and feel such divine Encouragements. We know that a weak Christian can do Wonders with an Almighty Saviour, and an All-sufficient Promise. When St. Paul had this Word given him, *My Grace is sufficient for thee*, he could glory even in his Infirmities, that the *Power of Christ might rest upon him*, 2 Cor. xii. The little feeble Man of a contemptible Presence, could do all things through Christ strengthening him, Phil. iv. 13. And every Believer has the same almighty Helper, the same Gospel, and the same Promises.

In the last Place, Consider the large and never fading Crown of Glory, that awaits the Conqueror at the End of the Christian Conflict. *Be thou faithful unto Death and I will give thee a Crown of Life*, Rev. ii.

10. Consider the Honour and Triumph, those Riches of Glory, and that everlasting Inheritance, that shall be your Reward in the future World, thro' the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ: *He that overcometh shall sit down with me on my Throne, &c. Rev. iii. 21. He that overcometh shall inherit all things, Rev. xxi. 7.* Put all these together in the Balances, with a few Crosses and Disappointments, a little Trouble and Uneasiness; nay, though you should add Torture and Death in the same Scale, you may easily judge which will out-weigh. Gaze at your Crown of Life, and your immortal Hopes, till you feel your Souls divinely animated to the Combat: Learn from the Apostle, and assume that glorious Language, *Our light Afflictions which are but for a Moment, are scarce to be mentioned or named with the far more exceeding and eternal Weight of Glory that shall be revealed, Rom. viii. 18. Therefore we both labour and suffer Reproach, therefore we bear all present Sorrows with holy Courage, because we look not at the things that are seen, little things, that are temporal; but look at the great unseen things that are eternal, 2 Cor. iv. ult.*

The Fourth and Last general Head of Discourse shall now furnish us with some sacred Remedies against this slavish Fear.

The Passion of Fear, in general, is wisely wrought by the great God into human Nature: 'Tis a Disturbance both of our animal Composition, and of the Mind upon the apprehension of some approaching Evil, or upon the apparent Danger of it. This is an excellent Provision, which the God of Nature has made, to guard us from many Mischiefs. 'Tis innocent and useful when it is fixed on a proper Object, and exercised in a proper Degree. It becomes a Part of our Religion when God is the Object of our Fear, whereby we maintain such a holy Awe of his Majesty, as awakens a constant Desire to please him, join'd with a Temper of holy Love, But



But when we suffer *Creatures* to raise and influence our Fears upon every Occasion, so as to ruffle and disquiet our Spirits, to throw the Soul from off its Rest, and to turn us aside from the steady Course of Duty, when it becomes a sinful and forbidden Passion, and we should make it our Business to watch against it, and suppress it.

There are some Persons so feeble in their native Constitutions, or their Spirits are so weakened by the Distempers of the Flesh, that *Fear* is a constant Tyrant over them: Their Case is to be pitied indeed, but they ought to stir up themselves as far as possible to shake off this Bondage, lest it withhold them from the Practice of necessary Duties, and rob them of all the Comforts of Religion.

This *slavish Fear* is a Disease of the Mind, as well as a Weakness of Nature; and besides, our summoning together all the Powers and *Precepts of Reason*, we should also apply the *Remedies of Religion*, in order to remove it: If the divine Spirit concur with his Blessing, the following *Methods* may be made happily successful.

I. See to it that ye are *Christians indeed*, that you have the Power of Religion wrought in your Hearts, otherwise you will never be able boldly to maintain the Form and the Profession of it in an Hour of Danger. *Fear* will prevail over every thing but true *Faith*: And if your Religion be not inward and sincere, and built on solid Foundations, it will tremble and totter, and be in great Danger of being utterly lost. One hard Name, one biting Reproach, one witty Scoff or ugly Slander, will dash the Hypocrite out of Countenance, and he dares not stand up for his God and Saviour.

And remember also that your *Faith* must be always kept awake and lively. See to it that your Hope be not only well established, but you must preserve your Evidences for Heaven ever clear, that

ye may look upon your selves as the *Care and Charge of Christ*, and under the special Eye and Protection of *God your Saviour*. This was the divine Foundation on which the great Apostle raised his Courage in the Gospel to so high a Degree. I am neither afraid to suffer these things, (saith he) that is, Bonds and Imprisonments; nor am I ashamed of this Gospel, for I know whom I have believed, I know him as my Saviour, and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him against the Day of his Appearance, 2 Tim. i. 12.

If you would raise your Spirits to a sublime Pitch of holy Fortitude, brighten your Faith and Hope daily, by a frequent Examination of the Frame of your Hearts, by watchful walking before God, by committing your Souls afresh into the Hands of *Jesus* and his Spirit, for pardoning and renewing Grace, that you may believe on just and solid Grounds, that you are the Children of God, and that *Jesus* is your Salvation. A lively Faith gives divine Courage. Faith is a noble Shield to ward off Fear, and our Helmet is the Hope of Salvation.

Take heed of defiling your Souls with Sensuality: Take heed of any false Biasses on your Spirit, and wrong Designs in your Actions, lest you bring fresh Guilt upon your Consciences. Guilt will create Fear, and fill the Soul with a perplexing Tumult of Thoughts. But when the Terrors of this World assault you on every Side, Reproaches and Threatnings, the Frowns of your Friends, and the Rage of your Enemies, you may be all serene and peaceful within, while you maintain a sacred Consciousness of Soul, that you have been seeking the Light of Truth, and pursuing the Path of Duty. When I can say, *God is my Witness*, that I am sincerely labouring in his Service; when I can look up to Heaven, though my Friends scorn me, and say, *My Record is on High*; I may imitate the Faith and Courage of *Job* in his best Hours, and leave all my Interests

terests in the Hand of my God. Let our Faith be active then, and our Conscience clear, that we may read our Title to all the Promises, and apply them to our own Case with Courage and Assurance. *The God of Hope will fill us with all Joy and Peace in believing,* Rom. vi. 13.

The Covenant of Grace is a blessed Treasury: There is Armour of Defence to be found against every Assault and Danger. If the Promises of the Covenant be ours, we shall be secur'd of a happy final Issue of all our Sufferings: *All things shall work together for our good,* Rom. viii. 28. *If God be for us, who shall be against us?* If we behold God engaged on our side, we may defy a Legion of Adversaries in the Name of the Lord our God. *Thou art my Glory* (says the Psalmist) *and my shield, and the lifter up of my Head.* The little Word (My) shews his own Interest in his God, and then he can grow brave in the very Centre of a thousand Deaths and Dangers. *I will not be afraid of ten thousands of People that have set themselves against me round about,* Psal. iii. 3, 6.

II. *Get a large and general Acquaintance with the Promises of the Gospel, \* that in every special time of need you may have some suitable Word of Refuge and Support.* From the 40<sup>th</sup> to the 45<sup>th</sup> Chapters of *Isaiah*, there is a Variety of rich Encouragements against slavish Fear: And there is another Treasure of them from the 50<sup>th</sup> to the 55<sup>th</sup>. Many a Christian has been able to live upon them, in the most dangerous and distressing Seasons. They are divine Springs of Courage, and they overflow with Consolation. The Assurances of holy *David* in the Midst of his Perils, have been a glorious Support to the fearful Soul.

\* A little Book published lately by Mr. Samuel Clarke, of St. Albans, is of excellent Use for this Purpose. The Title of it is, *A Collection of the Promises of Scripture, under their proper Heads.* 1720.

Several of his *Psalms* are fill'd with the same heavenly Cordials. You can hardly find three of them together, without some Triumphs of Faith in them. In the Writings of the *Evangelists* and in the *Epistles*, you may read many precious Promises scattered abroad, to allay your Fears. In the second and third Chapters of the *Revelations*, they stand thick as the Spangles of Heaven: They sparkle like Stars in the Firmament at Midnight, and they ever shine brightest in the darkest Sky. 'Tis with unknown Pleasure that the Soul of a Christian contemplates and surveys those heavenly Lights in his most gloomy and dismal Hours, and they turn the Shadows of Death into Morning.

Though it is of excellent Use, to have the Mind and Memory well stor'd with the various Promises of the Covenant, yet in some special Seasons of Trial, 'tis of eminent Advantage to keep the Mind and Thoughts fixed upon some single Promise, that is most suited to the present Danger or Suffering; and to the present Taste and Relish of the Soul. In such a Season, the running speedily from one Promise to another, and skimming over them with a slight Survey, will not be so effectual a Relief, as fixing upon some peculiar and proper Word of Grace, and living upon it for a whole Day together. Thus every Morning you may take some new Comforter with you, and let it abide upon your Heart all Day, and it will whisper to your Soul with divine Sweetness, in the dark and solitary Watches of the Night. When some special Terror possesses your Thoughts, and the heavy Oppression returns often upon your Spirits; or when any fresh Assault comes on you from without or within, fly to the Word you have chosen for your Refuge; repeat it often, and cleave to it by Meditation. *The Name of the Lord is a strong Tower, the Righteous runneth to it and is safe: And remember God has magnified his own Word above all the rest of his Name, Prov. xviii. 10.*  
Psal.



Pfal. cxxxviii. 2. Try this Method, it has been successful and well approved, and I doubt not but that you will be able to attest the Success of it thro' the Aids of divine Grace.

III. *Preserve the Spirit of Prayer always in exercise,* and the Spirit of Fortitude will descend on you. Address the Throne of God with Earnestness and Faith, and cry to the Lord the God of your Salvation without ceasing. 'Tis he gives Spirits to renew the Battle, when we are almost tired and grown weary, *Isa. xl. 28, 29.* He gives Courage in the midst of Terrors, for he can preserve and secure us in the extreamest Perils. *We despaired of Life* (saith the Apostle) *and had the Sentence of Death in our selves, but we were delivered, for we trusted in him that raiseth the Dead,* 2 Cor. i. 8, 9, 10. 'Tis he that repels the most imminent Dangers, it is he rebukes the Spirit of Fear, and gives us the Spirit of Power, and holy Fortitude, 2 Tim. i. 7. *Wait on the Lord, and be of good Courage, and he shall strengthen thy Heart; wait, I say, on the Lord,* Psal. xxvii. 14.

But be sure in all your Addresses to the Mercy-Seat, have an Eye to Christ Jesus the Mediator, your Advocate at the Throne, and the Captain of your Salvation, who is engaged to see you brought safe to Heaven. The Father has entrusted you as Sheep in his Hand, and he will not suffer you to Perish. Look to him as your great High Priest and Intercessor in Heaven; and since you have such an High Priest as Jesus the Son of God, who can be touched with the feeling of our Infirmities, let us come boldly to the Throne of Grace, that we may obtain Mercy, and find Grace to help in time of Need, Heb. iv. 14, &c. Many a feeble Christian who has gone to the Mercy-Seat, trembling and terrified under huge Apprehensions of Danger, and almost overwhelmed with tumultuous Fears, has risen up from his Knees with a heavenly Calmness and Composure: The Army of

his Fears has vanish'd at once, and he has gone out to face the most formidable of his Adversaries, with divine Resolution and Courage. *I sought the Lord and he heard me, and delivered me from all my Fears. They looked to him and were enlighten'd, and their Faces were not ashamed. The Angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them. O taste and see that the Lord is good: Blessed is the Man that trusteth in him, Psal. xxxiv. 4--8, &c. In the Day when I cried, thou answeredst me, and didst strengthen me with Strength in my Soul, Psal. cxxxviii. 3.*

IV. *Get a greater Degree of Weanedness from the Flesh, and from all the Delights and Satisfactions that belong to this mortal Life:* Then as you will not feel so great a Pain in being stript of them, so neither will your Soul be filled with Terror, when you are in Danger of losing them. Learn to put off a little of that sinful Tenderness for self, which we brought into the World with us. One of the first Lessons in the School of Christ, is *Self-denial*; Matt. xvi. 24. *If any Man will come after me, i. e. be my Disciple, let him deny himself, and take up his Cross, and follow me.*

'Tis a certain tender Fondness for our Flesh that makes us afraid of Pain. 'Tis a Fondness for our Name and Reputation that makes us afraid of Reproaches. 'Tis a Fondness for our Possessions, and our easy Circumstances in the World, that makes us afraid of Poverty: And too great a fondness for Life makes us afraid of dying. Whensoever therefore the Cause of Christ plainly calls us to risque our Name and Honour in the World, to part with our Wealth or our Ease, and to venture to expose Life itself, we shrink from the Command; slavish and sinful Fear prevails mightily upon us, because we love Earth, and self, and Flesh better than we ought to do. We must subdue this *Self-love*, and unmanly Softness,

*Softness*, if we would approve ourselves as good *Soldiers of Jesus Christ*, and gain a Spirit of sacred Courage and Resolution. We must be dead to the Things of Flesh and Sense, and gain a Victory over the Complaints and Groanings of Nature. We must go as far as we can toward parting with *right Hands*, and *right Eyes*, in every Sense of the Words, if we would be Christians indeed.

V. *Endeavour to keep yourselves always employ'd in some proper Work, that your Fears may be diverted when they can't immediately be overcome.* If our Thoughts and Hands are idle and empty, we lie open to the Invasion and Tumult of our Fears, and we give them leave to assault us on all sides.

The Passion and Principle of this slavish Fear, is mingled with our Flesh and Blood, and therefore we must employ even our Flesh and Blood in some better Business, that we may turn the Current of Animal Nature, and leave the Imagination no leisure to sit brooding over its own Terrors. Want of Occupation and Engagement of the Powers of Nature, exposes the Mind of Man to the inroad of all the frightful Images, that Fancy can furnish out, and to all the terrifying Suggestions of a watchful and malicious Tempter. That wicked Spirit has some strange and unknown Methods of Access to our Souls: He will worry the Sheep of *Christ* with Terrors, when he is not suffered to devour or destroy them; and an unbusied Mind is prepared to admit his worst Temptations.

But while I am pressing you to find out some Employment for yourselves, take care that it be such as may approve itself to God and your own Consciences. We must be ever found in the way of Duty, (as I hinted before) if we would support a holy Courage. 'Tis only *the Righteous* that has just reason to be *bold as a Lion*: Be ready to meet *Christ* the Judge, and his glorious Appearance

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his Fears has vanish'd at once, and he has gone out to face the most formidable of his Adversaries, with divine Resolution and Courage. *I sought the Lord and he heard me, and delivered me from all my Fears. They looked to him and were enlightened, and their Faces were not ashamed. The Angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them. O taste and see that the Lord is good: Blessed is the Man that trusteth in him, Psal. xxxiv. 4—8, &c. In the Day when I cried, thou answeredst me, and didst strengthen me with Strength in my Soul, Psal. cxxxviii. 3.*

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at all Times, and then you need not fear all that Earth or Hell can do against you.

[If this Sermon be too long, it may be divided here.]

Let us proceed now to propose some further Remedies against this slavish Passion of Fear.

VI. *Keep your Eye fix'd on the Hand of God in all the Affairs of Men.* View his powerful and over-ruling Providence in all Things, even in those Things that awaken your most troublesome Fears. Think with your selves, that you put *Creatures* in the Place of God, if you Fear them more than God, as though they were the sovereign Lords and Disposers of all your Comforts. Learn to see God in all Things, and behold him in all Things as *your God*, and then *Creatures* will have but little Influence to awaken any of the Passions of the Soul, or to raise distressing Fears within you.

Are your Spirits so weak, that *Thunder and Lightning*, and the *Storms of the Air* affright you? Think who it is commands the Tempests to arise, and quashes the Storms at his Pleasure. In whose Hand is the Thunder? Who kindles the Lightning? Who directs the Flashes, and guides every sweeping Blast of Wind or Fire to its appointed Place? Remember the Disciples in the midst of the Storm, and the Language of Jesus walking upon the Water, *It is I, be not afraid.*

Or if the publick Commotions of the World awaken your Fears, read the Name and Presence of God, even your God, in the *xlvi<sup>th</sup> Psalm*, and rejoice and stand firm amidst the Tumult and shaking of the Nations. *God is our Refuge and Strength, a very present Help in Trouble. Therefore we will not fear, tho' the Earth be removed, and tho' the Mountains be cast into the midst of the Sea. The Heathen raged, the Kingdoms were moved: He uttered his Voice, the Earth melted.*

melted. *The Lord of Hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our Refuge. Selah* \*.

Or, perhaps, more particular and personal Dangers and Afflictions threaten your good Name, your Estate, your Flesh, your Life. Well, *The Name of God in his Presence* is an universal Spring of Comfort and Courage, a wide spreading Shield against every Mischief.

Are you terrify'd at the Thoughts of *personal Reproach and Slander*, know that the Tongues of Men are within the Reach of the Hand of God, and he can cast a Bridle of Restraint upon them; but if he take off that Restraint, and leave them to their own Perverseness and Rage, learn to say as good *David*, when *Shimei* curst him; The Hand of the Lord is in it, God hath given him a Loose to curse me: And thus sweetly compose your selves to an Acquiescence in the providential Will of your heavenly Father.

Is *Poverty and Want* the Thing you dread? But is not God your heavenly Father? And can you not trust him to provide for his Children? Will he *give the young Ravens their Food when they cry*, and will he not feed his Sons and his Daughters? It is true, you may be reduced to Bread and Water, and brought down to the very lowest Circumstances, and you must submit to his Will: God will feed your Nature, tho' he will not feed your Pride.

Are you affrighted at the Thoughts of *Sickness and Pain*? Remember Diseases are the Servants of our Lord *Christ*, he can bid Pains and Anguish of Body *go, or come*, as he pleases; nor can they seize you without his Commission, nor tarry with you beyond his appointed Moment. Commit your Flesh to him as well as your Spirit: He is a wise Physi-

\* That is an excellent Treatise which Mr. *Flavel* has publish'd against *sinful Fear*, especially in Times of publick Danger and Persecution: And his little Book of *keeping the Heart* has some valuable Chapters in it, containing rich Preservatives against this Weakness of the Mind.

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cian, and he will deal tenderly with you : He has worn Flesh and Blood, and has a sympathizing Heart, nor will he grieve his own Members beyond what his Wisdom and his Love sees needful.

Are you afraid of *persecuting Enemies*, that hunt you from Place to Place, and would pursue you even to the Death? Remember that they are but the Slaves of *Satan*, and they and their Master are all in a Chain, under the sovereign Dominion of *Christ* your Lord. The Wicked of the Earth, in this sense, are called *the hand of God*, Psal. xvii. 14. They are but as Instruments to execute his divine Purposes, and they can't act nor move beyond his Permission. He put a *Hook in the Nostrils of Sennacherib* that *Affyrian* wild Beast, and a *Bridle into his Jaws*; he suffered him to come and gaze at *Jerusalem*, then, in one Night, the Angel of Death destroyed all his Army, and the Lord put a Song of Triumph into the Mouth of his People.

In a *Time of Persecution*, in the last Century, some pious Ministers were met together, expressing their mutual Fears, and consulting how to provide for their own Safety, when one stood up in the Spirit of Faith, and said, *We are all Immortal till our Work is done*; whereby he declared his lively Sense of the restraining Power of God over the Malice of Men, and his Assurance that God would preserve them in Life, so long as he had any farther Service to employ them in. This was, in truth, a *sublime Thought*! A *Roman* Orator, or a *Greek* Poet, would have been admired and celebrated for it by all the Critics; This was the *Language of Faith*, and it had a sublime and glorious Effect, it dispersed their Fears at once, and they went away rejoicing.

VII. *Recollect your own Experiences of the Goodness of God in carrying you through former seasons of Danger and Sorrow : I will remember, says David, the Works of the Lord, and his Wonders of old, Psal. lxxvii. 11.*

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I will remember the special Deliverances I have obtained in Times of most imminent Peril. Think with your selves how high the Tempest of your Fears has sometimes risen, and God has sunk them at once into Silence. Think how extreme your Danger has been, when you have been perplexed in a wilderness of Thorns, and have seen no Way for your Escape, but the Eye of God hath found a Path of Safety for you, a *Path which the Eagle's Eye hath not seen*: He has led you as one that was blind, *by the way that you knew not, he has made Darkness Light before you, and crooked things strait*, according to his Promise, *Isa. xlii. 16.*

And remember also, that sometimes when the very Evil which you fear'd has fallen upon you, it has not been half so heavy and painful as your Fears have represented it, and you have been enabled to bear that which you thought was Intolerable. Remember the Years of ancient Time, and rejoice in that God who has often disappointed your Fears of Destruction, and has out-done all your Hopes in a way of Deliverance: *I said, I am cut off from the Earth, and shall go to the gates of the Grave; I reckoned from Night till the Morning that he will cut me off with pining Sickness, from Day even to Night, he will make an end of me: But in love to my Soul, O Lord, thou hast delivered it from the pit of Corruption, for thou hast cast all my Sins behind thy back.* Perhaps your own Experience may teach you to sing this Song of *Hezekiah*, as it is recorded *Isa. xxxviii. 9.* or to join with holy *David*, and repeat his Hymns of Praise.

And thus, beside your own Experiences, you may review the happy Experiences of the Saints of old, or of Christians in later Times, and encourage your Faith in opposition to all your Fears.

VIII. Charge your Conscience solemnly with the Authority of the divine Command to suppress your Fears. Remember that the Exercises of Faith, Courage, and

and holy Firmness of Soul, are *Duties* as well as *Blessings*. Read how often the great God forbids his People to indulge their Fears, *Isa. xl. 10, 13, 14. chap. xliii. 1, 5. chap. xliv. 2, 8. Fear not*, is a Command perpetually repeated, because God well knew how prone our feeble Natures are to be affrighted at every appearance of Danger: And even when he calls his People *Jacob a Worm*, and confesses the extreme Weakness of their Nature under that Emblem, yet he insists on the same Precept still, *Fear not thou Worm Jacob, Isa. xli. 14.*

Our blessed Lord joins frequently in the same Prohibition of a slavish Fear: *Matt. x. 28. Fear not them which can kill the Body, but are not able to kill the Soul; but fear him rather, who can destroy Body and Soul in Hell.* And *Peter*, who once wanted Courage, and deny'd his Lord, in his elder and better Days, grew bolder for the Name of *Christ*, and he forbids us *to be afraid or troubled at the Terror of Men*, *1 Pet. iii. 13.* He repeats the Charge of the Prophet *Isaiab, Sanctify the Lord of Hosts in your Heart*; the Lord of Hosts alone is the proper Object of our supreme Fear. This will over-rule and abolish all other Fears, as the little Noises of Earth are lost in the Thunders of Heaven. The Fear of God in a sublime Degree will be an effectual Cure of our sinful Fear of Creatures.

'Tis true, the Principle of *Fear* is a natural Affection, 'tis rooted in Flesh and Blood, it grows high and domineers, especially in some Constitutions, and when the natural Spirits are enfeebled, it still gains the greater ascendancy over us: But if it be indulged and encouraged, it soon becomes *sinful*, for it seems to stand opposite to the Grace of *Faith*, and too often prevails over it. Therefore *Christ* chides his Disciples, when they were affrighted in the Storm while he was in the Ship: *Why are ye so fearful? How is it that ye have no Faith?* And even when *Peter* was walking upon the Water, and *Christ* was

near

near him, he saith. *O thou of little Faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?* Matt. xiv. 31. Mark. iv. 40. For a Christian to give himself up to the wild Tyranny of his Fears, is contrary to the very Spirit and Design of the Gospel of Christ, Rom. viii. 15. *We have not received the Spirit of Bondage to fear, but the Spirit of Adoption, the Spirit of Power and Love.* Remember then you are the Sons and Daughters of God: 'Tis below the Dignity of your Character to yield to this Slavery, and your Father himself reproves, and your Redeemer forbids it.

IX. *Think of the many Advantages that arise from a holy Fortitude of Spirit in the midst of Dangers.* This divine Temper of Mind will establish your Feet on a Rock in the midst of Storms, it will animate you to practise every Duty, and to prevent many of the Mischiefs you fear. This will preserve the Soul in a sacred Serenity and Calmness under all the gloomy and painful Events of Providence. Without this Firmness of Spirit you can never practise what Christ commands his Disciples, and that is, *to possess their Souls in Patience in the Hour of their Distress.* But we may keep up the Government of our selves by a holy Fortitude and calm Submission to the Will of God. This will make Sorrows lighter, and the heaviest Afflictions become more tolerable.

Whereas, if we give a Loose to Fear, it throws the whole Frame of Nature into a tumultuous Hurry and Confusion, it takes away the Use of Prudence to contrive the proper Means for our Escape, it cuts the Sinews of our most active Powers, and enfeebles our whole Nature, so that we become an easy Prey to every Adversary. The more we are affrighted the less able are we to defend our selves.

Fear is a dreadful Bondage of the Soul, and it holds the Man in Chains: Therefore in the Text just now cited, the Spirit of Fear is called a Spirit of Bondage. It is this that brings the Soul down to taste  
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the Bitterness, and to feel the smart of those very Evils which affright us at a distance, and which perhaps never come near us. Those very Sufferings which are prevented by the Mercy of God, we endure them in our Thoughts, and feel the Pain of them by an Indulgence of excessive Fear. We suffer an Affliction once, if we are overwhelmed with the Terror of it: And if at last it does really overtake us, we double the Suffering, and make the Pain the longer. Oftentimes in Cases of bodily Distempers, the Fear itself brings the Disease, and aggravates all the Symptoms. If we could read the Records of the Grave, we should find that many a Person has been oppress'd, and sunk down to Death, by the excessive Fear of dying.

The *last Remedy of Fear* which I shall mention, is this, *Suppose the worst that can come, and be calmly prepared for it*: This will be a mighty Relief against the tyranny of our Fears.

You are afraid of *losing your Honour* among Men, afraid to bear the Scourge of their Tongues and bitter Reproaches: But think with your selves, when Slander and Falshood have done their worst, 'tis but the Wind of the Breath of Man, and this cannot hurt your best Interest, while you stand approved of God. Infamy amongst Men is but a trifling Evil, if compared with Praise, Honour and Glory among the Saints before the Throne, and the Applause of Jesus and his Angels at the last great Day.

You are frighted with the *hideous appearance of Poverty*, because *Scorn* attends it as well as *Want*. But our blessed Lord *had not where to lay his Head*, he was fed by the Bounty of kind Friends and pious Women, who ministred to him of their Substance. The Great and the Wise, the Rich and the Learned of that Day, made him their Mockery: The very finger of Scorn pointed at him in the Streets: And why should the Disciple think it necessary that he should



should be above his Lord? You may be *poor in this World*, and at the same time *rich in Faith, and Heirs of the Kingdom*.

You are afraid of *Sickness and Pains of the Flesh*, and your Life becomes a burthen to you, by reason of your constant dread of some infectious Distempers. You shift your Dwellings, you hide yourself at home, and yet you enjoy no Peace. Suppose the Distemper should seize you, has not Sickness often brought your Soul nearer to God? and if your *outward Man has decay'd*, your *inward Man* and your *best Interest* have had a rich Advancement thereby.

You are *terrify'd at the Threatnings of bloody Men*. It must be granted, that Flesh has a strong Empire over the Soul, where Dangers of Torment and Death appear. But suppose Men of Violence kill the Body, then you will be dismissed at once from all their Fury, and from your own Fears. Their Terror cannot reach beyond the Grave; that is a safe and peaceful hiding place.

But, perhaps, you are frighted at the *Thoughts of dying, even the common way of Nature*: It may be, the King of Terrors dresses himself in formidable Airs, and shakes your very Frame: But would you live here on Earth for ever? A Christian who has Hopes, and Interests, and Possessions beyond the Regions of Time and Sense, should not be afraid to enter upon them. Remember that Death itself, even in its most formidable Appearances, is ordained of God to open the Door of Heaven for you, and let your Souls into the Joys of eternal Life: The Grace of your Redeemer, and the Epistle of St. Paul, join to teach you this Song, *O Death, where is thy Sting?* and, *O Grave, where is thy Victory?*

Thus, by keeping your Soul in a ready Preparation for the worst Events, that your Fear can imagine, you overcome this Tyrant of the Soul, and triumph over this slavish Passion. Thus you trans-

form your very Terrors into Joys, and gather Honey out of the Lion, as *Samson* did. The more fatal your Dangers are, the nearer is your final Deliverance. Say to yourself, Is my feeble Flesh tottering into the Grave? Then my Soul is so much nearer to the Gates of Glory. This is the holy Skill of turning Evil into Good. Such a Faith kept in lively exercise can make Roses spring out of the midst of Thorns, and change the Briars of the Wilderness into the Fruit-Trees of Paradise. O what a state of divine and sacred Peace does that Christian enjoy, who can look stedfastly upon the face of Danger, in its most frightful Forms, and say, through Grace, *I am prepared! Tho' I walk through the valley of the shadow of Death, I will fear no evil, for my God is with me, and he will be with me for ever.*

#### THE RECOLLECTION.

What Progress hast thou made, O my Soul, in acquiring this sacred Fortitude? The former Discourse has taught thee the Necessity of it, and the various Occasions for the exercise of it in the course of the Christian Life. In this latter Sermon thou hast heard the *Motives* that should awaken all thy Powers to obtain and practise it, and thou hast been informed what are some of the most sovereign *Remedies* against thy foolish and sinful Fears.

Methinks I feel the Want of this holy Hardiness of Soul, to walk through the midst of Temptations unmov'd, untterrify'd, and undefil'd. My Virtue and my Religion have too often suffer'd by the prevailing Power of a slavish Fear: My Conscience has lost its Innocence and Peace by too many sinful Compliances. What shall I do to harden my Spirit all over, that Temptation and slavish Fear may not find a Place to enter?

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For this End I review the glorious *Motives* set before me. For this End I look to the noble *Army of Martyrs*, to the blessed *Society of the Apostles*, to the *Cloud of Witnesses* which have trod the same Path before me, who have born an undaunted Testimony to the same Religion which I profess. I would chide and shame myself out of my sinful Cowardise, while I behold their illustrious Examples of Zeal.

But above all, I fix my Eye upon *Jesus*, the divine Author of this Religion, *the Author and Finisher of my Faith*. I would learn of the *Captain of my Salvation*, who *was made perfect through Sufferings*, Heb. ii. 10. I would learn of my divine Teacher, to *endure Hardships like a good Soldier of Christ*, while I fight under his Banner, against those very Enemies that he hath subdued.

Consider, my Soul, *What thou art, What is thy Character and Profession*: If thou art a *Christian indeed*, thou hast taken up Arms against *Sin and Satan*, and a *World* that is in Rebellion against God: And shall the Frown of a Man make thee drop thy Weapons, and discourage thee from the glorious Service?

Thou hast many rich Encouragements to expect divine Assistance: Many joyful Assurances of Victory are given to them that endure in the day of Conflict, and a glorious Crown stands ready for those that Overcome. O may the Crown of Glory sparkle in my Eye, and grow brighter and larger by a nearer View, and a perpetual Contemplation of it! Make me forgetful of Ease and Health, O my God, and of all my mortal Interests, while I press forward with sacred Courage to lay hold on this Crown! Blessed Saviour, make me triumph over every Difficulty, till Death, the last of all my Enemies be subdued, and I have obtained the glorious Prize.

I would shake my self out of my Fears, and awaken my Zeal by such *Motives* as these. And O that I could treasure up in my Memory the various *Remedies* of which I have heard this Day, to heal this Infirmary of my Nature, and to overcome these foolish and sinful Terrors of Spirit! I will review my *Faith*, and the *Grounds of my Hope*, that I may know that I am a *Christian indeed*, that I am one of the Sheep of *Christ*, and under his divine Care; and I would watch against every Temptation, lest I contract a new Guilt and Defilement, and thereby darken my Evidences and awaken my Fears.

I would survey with Pleasure the *gracious Words of Promise*, which are scattered up and down in the Book of God. O may the blessed Spirit print many of them upon my Heart, that they may be always present with me, and that I may find them within my Reach, and ready at Hand, as a special Cordial in every fainting Hour! I would run to them as my sure Refuge in every Season of Danger and Conflict, and be animated to confront a sinful World.

Give me, O my God, give me *the Spirit of Prayer*, and let me keep ever near to the Throne of Grace, that my Soul may not come thither as a Stranger, but that in every Surprise I may address thee as a God near at hand, and that in the Name of my great High Priest, *Jesus the Son of God*, I may find Grace ready to help me in the Time of Need.

Wean me, O Lord, from all the *Delights and Hopes of Flesh and Sense*! Mortify me to all the Honours and the Joys of a perishing Life, and a vain World. Arm my Soul all over with a religious Hardiness, that I may venture into the Field of Battle, and may scarce feel the Wounds which I receive in thy Cause.

Give me the *happy Skill of diverting my Fears*, when I cannot at once subdue them, and lead me in-



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to proper Employments of my Heart and Hand for this Purpose.

I would *live as under the eye of God*. I would take notice of his Hand in all the Affairs of Life, and all the Dangers that attend me. I would learn of *Moses to endure the sight of Afflictions, as seeing him who is invisible*. Let me hear thy Voice, O *Jesus*, my Saviour, let me hear thy Voice walking upon the Waters, when I am tossed about upon the Waves of Distress and Difficulty, speak to my Soul, and say, *It is I, be not afraid*.

Surely *I have had some Experiences of the divine Presence* with me in the midst of Dangers: GOD has sometimes disappointed all my Fears, and interposed his Shield of Power and Love for my Defence: Why should not I trust a faithful GOD, and that infinite Goodness which I have already tasted of?

I *charge my Conscience with the authority of thy Word*. O Lord, when thou forbiddest all my sinful Fears I would renounce them too, I would struggle to break these painful Fetters, and fight against this inward slavery of the Soul, these domestick Tyrants. O that the *Spirit of Power* were always with me, to dispel the *Spirit of Bondage*.

I would *be bravely prepared for the worst of Sufferings*, to which my Circumstances in this Life may expose me. I would be ready to meet Contempt and Scandal, Poverty, Sickness, and Death itself. *Jesus* can support me in the heaviest Distresses, though all the Sorrows I fear should come upon me. He can bear me on the Wings of Faith and Hope, high above all the Turmoils and Disquietudes of Life; He can carry me through the Shadow of the dark Valley, and scatter all the Terrors of it. Give me, O Lord, these Wings of Faith and Hope, and bear me upon them through all the Remains of my short Journey in this Wilderness: Make me active and zealous in thy Cause while I live, and

convey me safely above the reach of Fear, through the valley of Death, to the Inheritance prepared for me in the Land of Light. Then my Fears shall cease for ever, for Enemies and Dangers are not known in that Land. There all our Conflicts shall be changed into everlasting Triumphs, while Songs of Honour and Salvation ascend in a full Choir to the Grace that has made us Overcomers.  
*Amen.*





# SERMON XXXIII.

The Universal Rule of Equity.

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MATT. vii. 12.

*All Things whatsoever ye would that Men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them; for this is the Law and the Prophets.*

**W**HEN our blessed Lord took upon him the publick Office of a *Prophet* or *Teacher* amongst Men, he found it was not only necessary to instruct them in the sacred Mysteries of Religion, and inform them of their *Duty to God* his Father, and to himself; but he employed much of his Ministry also, to teach them the *Practice of social Virtue*, and how they should behave toward their Fellow-Creatures. In the *Heathen* World the Rules of Morality were lost in a great Measure, as well as the Rules of Piety and Worship; and the *Jews*, the peculiar People of God, had grossly corrupted both the one and the other. As our Saviour refin'd the Practice of *Religion towards God*, and rais'd it by his Gospel, to a high and heavenly Degree, beyond what Mortals had known before, so he explain'd and establish'd the *Rules of moral Virtue*, in a more glorious and convincing manner than the World had been acquainted with.

Read his Life, and observe how often he takes Occasion in the several Seasons of his Preaching, to give particular Directions for our Conduct toward our Neighbours. But after all, he knew that the Nature of Man was corrupt, his Passions strong, his Memory frail, and that he would be ready to neglect, or forget his various sacred Precepts, when there was most need to practise them; and therefore he thought it proper to give one *short and comprehensive Rule of Equity* to regulate all our Conduct, that should be written as it were in our very Souls: And this is contained in the Words of my Text, *Whatsoever ye would that Men should do unto you, even so do ye unto them; for this is the Law and the Prophets.*

To dilate a little upon this Subject, and refresh a living Sense of it upon your Memories and your Consciences, I shall follow this Method, and enquire,

- I. What is the *true Meaning* of this divine Rule.
- II. What is the *special Argument* that our Lord uses in order to enforce it.
- III. Wherein the *particular Excellencies* of it appears.
- IV. I shall conclude with some *Reflections* on this Subject.

First, *What is the true Meaning of this divine Rule?*

In order to understand this Rule a-right, we must consider *what it does not require*, as well as *what it does*: For on the one Side, some selfish necessitous and unreasonable Persons may expect more from us than this Rule obliges us to perform: And on the other Side, a timorous and weak Conscience may perhaps be led into a Mistake, and think itself bound by this Rule to perform some Instances of Kindness to others, which are utterly unreasonable and unrequired, and which might be injurious on  
other



other Accounts to our selves, or to our Families, or to the rest of Mankind.

We must remember then, that this Rule does not mean to oblige us to give all that to another, or do all that for another, which we could possibly desire or wish to be bestowed upon us, or done for us; but *whatsoever we could reasonably desire, and justly expect another should do to us, that we ought to do to him when he is in the like Circumstances.* All that in our calm and sedate Thoughts we judge fit and proper another should do for us, that we should practise and do for him. Such Requests as we could make to others, and could justify them to our selves in our own Consciences, according to the Principles of Humanity, the Rules of Civil Society, and the Rights of Mankind, such we ought not to deny to others when they stand in need. Not all that a fond Self-love would prompt us to ask, but all that our Conscience tells us we might with Reason expect.

I shall mention an *Instance* or two, which will more fully explain what I mean.

A *Criminal under righteous Condemnation* for Murder or Robbery, may think thus with himself, "Surely I would pardon the Judge or the Prince, if he were in my Circumstances, therefore he ought to pardon me." Or the Judge himself might think, "I should be glad to be pardon'd or not condemn'd if I were in the Case of this Criminal, therefore I will not condemn him." This sort of Thoughts arising from unreasonable and unjust Principles, either of a sinful Self-love, or Indulgence to Iniquity, are not to be the Measure of our Actions nor Expectations; these are not *just* and *reasonable Desires*, nor can our own Conscience in our sedate and calm Enquiries judge so concerning them.

Again, *If we were poor and starving*, it may be we would be glad if our rich Neighbour would settle upon us a competent Estate sufficient to maintain us  
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for the Term of our Lives ; but this we cannot reasonably expect, or reasonably desire and demand ; therefore we are not bound ( be our Circumstances never so large ) to settle such a Competency upon our poor Neighbours, be their Circumstances never so mean. We cannot rationally expect these Things should be done unto us, we cannot equitably desire them of another, therefore we are not bound to do thus to another.

But if we are plac'd as *Criminals at the Bar of Judgment*, we may reasonably expect that all the favourable Circumstances which attend our Accusation should be well weigh'd, and all the kind Allowances made, which the nature of the Charge or Crime will admit ; for our Consciences would think it reasonably to allow so much to any Criminal, if we ourselves were placed in the Chair of Magistracy.

Or if we, through the frowns of Providence, are *poor and starving*, we may reasonably expect our rich Neighbour should bestow upon us a little of his Bread, a little of his Cloathing, to supply our extreme Necessities now and then ; and thus much our Neighbour may expect from us, when he is fallen into Decay by the Providence of God, while our Circumstances are large, and we are well furnished for such Bounty.

Thus you see the true Intent and Meaning of this universal Law of Equity, *viz.* That we practise toward our Neighbour in such a manner as our own Hearts and Consciences would think it reasonable he should practise towards us in the like Case.

The *Second Enquiry* was this : *What special Argument doth our Lord use to enforce the Observance of this sacred Precept ?*

When our Saviour had laid down this *general Rule*, he adds, *This is the Law and the Prophets* ; that is, this is the Summary of all the Rules of Duty, which are written in the *Law of Moses*, concerning our  
Car-

Carriage to our Neighbour, and of all the Laws which are explain'd by the succeeding *Prophets*, and sacred Writers under the Old Testament. They are all comprehended in this short Line, *Do to others as you would have others do to you.* 'Tis very nearly the same thing, in other words, with the Law of *Moses*, *Love thy Neighbour as thy self*, Lev. xix. 18. but it is much plainer and more intelligible: And indeed this Rule of *Moses* is to be understood and interpreted, and applied in practice, according to this plainer Rule of *Christ*, thus, "Let thy Love to thy Neighbour be as great as thou canst reasonably expect or desire thy Neighbour's Love should be to thy self."

When our blessed Lord gives an Abridgment or Abstract of the Ten Commandments, he doth it in these Words, *Mat. xxii. 37, 38, 39. Love the Lord thy God with all thy Heart and Soul*, i. e. Love God above all Things, *this is the first and great Command. And the second is like unto it, Love thy Neighbour as thy self*, i. e. Consider him as a Piece of human Nature, as a second Self, and imitate thy Love to thy self in thy Conduct toward him: Or, according to my Text, it may be explained thus; Enquire of thy own Heart how thou wouldst have him love thee, and let this be the Rule and Measure of thy Love to him. All our Duties to God or Man, all the Commands of the first and the second Table, all the Dictates of the *Law and the Prophets depend on these two Commandments.*

Then we answer the design of the Law, then we obey the Prophets, then we fulfil the Commands of *Moses*, and of *Christ*, when we give to God our supreme Love, and when we put ourselves in the room of our Neighbour, and then carry it toward him, according to the Love we expect he should bear to us. This is loving our Neighbours as our selves, and this Love is the fulfilling of the Law, *Rom. xiii. 10.*

When

When our Saviour delivers the Words of my Text, 'tis as if he had said to us, "If ye would  
 "practise all the Duties that you owe to your Fel-  
 "low-Creatures, and fulfil all the Laws of the se-  
 "cond Table, in the most compendious and perfect  
 "Manner, remember and practise this one general  
 "Direction, *Deal with the rest of Mankind as your*  
*Conscience judges they should deal with you,"* But  
 this Thought leads me to

The Third Enquiry, viz. *Wherein do the peculiar Excellencies of this Rule appear?*

This golden Rule hath many excellent Properties belonging to it. I shall mention a few on Purpose to impress it on your Consciences with more Conviction, Pleasure, and Power.

I. 'Tis a Rule that is easy to be understood, and as easy to be apply'd by the meanest and weakest Understanding. It is so plain, that what is said by *Isaiab* concerning all the Precepts of the Gospel, is more eminently true of this; *Tis an Highway of Holiness, and the wayfaring Man tho' a Fool shall not err therein,* Isa. xxxv. 8.

The Laws of Man are often exprest in such obscure Language and Terms of Art, that they puzzle us to find out the Meaning of them: And the nice Distinctions and subtle Reasonings of Men, oftentimes add to their Darkness, and raise new Disputes: But this is a Law that every Man understands; nor is it easy to be clouded by the Comments and Glosses of crafty Men, if we are but sincerely resolved to judge and practise according to it.

By the means of this Rule, they who never studied the Civil Law, nor took Pains in enquiring the moral Dictates of the Light of Nature; they who never examin'd the Statutes of a Nation, nor the Rules of natural Justice, are all furnish'd with a Law or Rule of Equity in their own Minds, by which to manage



manage their whole Practice, with regard to their Neighbours. Those who are not capable of long Trains of Reasoning, or of applying several general Rules to all their particular Cases ; yet are able to look into their own Hearts, and to ask this easy Question, *Would I my self be content to have others deal thus with me? Why then should I deal thus with another?*

II. 'Tis a very short Rule, and easy to be remember'd: The weakest Memory can retain it; and the meanest of Mankind may carry this about with them, and have it ready upon all Occasions. It is of admirable Use, to solve a thousand Cases of Conscience that may arise on the sudden, and may perplex our Minds with Difficulty, "It lies ready" (says a considerable Author) for present Use upon all Exigencies and Occasions. We can scarce be so far surprized by an immediate Necessity of acting, as not to have time for a short Recourse to this Rule, or room for a sudden Glance (as it were) upon it in our Minds, where it rests and sparkles always like the *Urim* and *Thummim* on the Breast of *Aaron*."

If we have no written Cases of Conscience, no Books at hand to direct our Practice, if we have no faithful Minister near us, no wise and pious Friend to consult on a sudden Occasion, this one Rule written in the Heart, may serve instead of all other Helps. This blessed Precept strikes a sudden and sacred Light into the Mind, where the Case may seem intricate: It shines upon our Way, and makes our Path plain, where an honest and scrupulous Conscience might be just before bewildred in the dark, and know not how to act. *Practise that, O Man! toward thy Neighbour, which thou art convinced thy Neighbour should practise toward thee.*

III. *This excellent Precept of Christ, carries greater evidence to the Conscience, and a stronger degree of Conviction in it, than any other Rule of moral Virtue.* As I said before, that a very little Reason will serve to apply it, so I say now, there is not much need of Reasoning to find it out; for we fetch the Proof of it from within our selves, even from our own inward Sensation and Feeling. If we would know what is just and equitable to do to our Neighbour, we need but ask our own inward Sense, and our Conscience together, what we would think equitable and just to receive from him? Thus there is but *one and the same Measure of Justice*, by which we must meet it out to our selves and others; and that Measure lies within us, even in the Heart. We are very sensible of Benefits and Injuries that we ourselves receive, and this very Sense of Injuries and Benefits, is, as it were, transcribed into our Consciences, from the tenderest Part of our own Souls, and becomes there a *Rule of Equity*, how we should treat our Neighbours.

'Tis a most righteous Precept of the ancient *Jewish* Law, and of universal Obligation, *Thou shalt not have in the Bag, or in thine House, divers Weights, and divers Measures; a great and a small: [i. e. one wherewith to buy, and another wherewith to sell;] but thou shalt have a perfect and just Weight; a perfect and just Measure shalt thou have.* This Precept, as soon as it is mentioned, strikes the Conscience with Conviction of the Justice of it: And what is said here of *Traffick* and *Dealing*, holds as truly of the general Commerce between Man and Man, in all the ordinary and extraordinary Affairs of Life: That mutual Exchange of good Offices, whereby Society is upheld, must be regulated in the same Manner, and by the same Rule; and the immediate Conviction of the Equity of it, doth as strongly strike the Conscience. "There must be a perfect Weight, and a just Measure, (saith the Author before cited) by which  
" all

“all Men are mutually obliged to regulate their  
“Conduct, in acting and suffering, in commanding  
“and obeying, in giving and receiving; and this  
“can be no other than the equal and righteous Rule  
“of the Text; *The doing in all Cases, and to all Per-*  
“*sons, even as we would be done unto.* There is no  
“one so absurd and unreasonable, as not to see, and  
“acknowledge the absolute Equity of this Com-  
“mand in the Theory, however he may swerve  
“and decline from it in his Practice.” For, it is  
founded not only in the Reason of Things, and in  
the common Share, and equal Interest that we all  
have in human Nature; but ’tis also written in the  
most sensible and the tenderest Part of our Constitu-  
tion; and from thence ’tis deriv’d to the Mind and  
Judgment, as a Law of Behaviour towards our Fel-  
low Creatures.

IV. Hence it comes to pass, that *it is a Precept particularly fitted for Practice, because it includes in it a powerful Motive to stir us up to do what it enjoins.* This Character of it, I borrow from the same Author, who talks thus upon it: “Other moral Max-  
“ims propose naked Truths to the *Understanding*,  
“which operate often but faintly and slowly on the  
“*Will* and *Passions*, the two active Principles of the  
“Mind of Man: But ’tis the peculiar Character  
“of this Rule, that it addresseth itself equally to  
“all these Powers (even to the *Passions*, and the  
“*Will*, as well as the *Understanding*); it not only di-  
“rects, but influences; it imparts both Light and  
“Heat; and, at the same time that it informs us  
“clearly what we are to do, excites us also in the  
“most tender and moving Manner, to the Perfor-  
“mance of it; for, in truth, its Seat is not more  
“in the Brain, than in the Heart of Man: It ap-  
“peals to our very Senses themselves, and exerts its  
“secret Force in so prevailing a Way, that it is  
“even felt as well as understood by us.

“There

“ There is nothing that we know, that gives a  
“ Man so true and lively a Sense of the Sufferings of  
“ others, or restrains him so powerfully from doing  
“ unrighteous and oppressive Things, as his having  
“ smarted formerly himself under the Experience of  
“ them. Now the supposing another Man’s ill Usage  
“ to be our own, is the giving our selves a present  
“ Sense, as it were, and a kind of feigned Experi-  
“ ence of it ; which doth, for the time, serve all  
“ the Purposes of a true one.”

V. It is such a Rule, as, if well apply’d, *will almost always secure our Neighbour from Injury, and secure us from Guilt, if we should chance to hurt him.* God will not impute Guilt to us, if we should happen to mistake in a Point of doubtful Enquiry, and to hurt our Neighbour by a conscientious Obedience to this Rule.

I say, it will *almost always* secure us from injuring our Neighbour. I cannot say, it is always an absolute, infallible, and certain Rule of *Right and Wrong* ; for our Knowledge of the eternal Rules of *Right and Wrong* is but imperfect ; neither our own Heads or Hearts are furnished with all the various and particular Principles of Equity. A meer enquiry into our own Hearts or Consciences, can never give us a perfect Knowledge of the *abstracted Rules of Justice* : Nor can it determine us to the certain Practice of it, in all the most intricate Cases, unless these *perfect Rules of Justice* were fully written in the Heart or Mind of every Man. But under the present Circumstances of Mankind, in this poor, ignorant, and corrupt State of human Nature, it appears to be the best, the most righteous, the most secure, and the most universal Rule that ever could be invented or given to Men ; for it will certainly secure and prevent every Man from injuring his Neighbour in all Cases, except where he himself is willing and content to receive equal Injury : And I am sure, *Self-Love* will tell us, that *these Cases are exceeding few.* It



It is evident therefore, that an honest Man will scarce ever mistake in keeping close to this Rule. And if I should then happen to do an Injury to my Neighbour, instead of strict Equity, yet I can appeal to God; and say, I endeavoured to apply this Rule to my Conscience, in the present Circumstances, with the utmost Sincerity; I acted no otherwise to my Neighbour, than I desired or judged it reasonable for my Neighbour to act towards me in the like Case. And surely my unavoidable Mistake will not be imputed to me as a Crime, where I have honestly follow'd the Rule my Saviour has given me, and acted therein according to the best Capacity of my Judgment.

VI. *'Tis a Rule as much fitted to awaken us to sincere Repentance upon the Transgression of it, as it is to direct us to our present Duty.* This Rule abides in the Bosom of a Christian, it dwells so near him, that it is, as it were, mingled with Conscience itself; and by this means, it becomes not only a *safe Guide*, but a *sharp Reprover* too; it soon puts us in mind where either Inclination or Practice warps towards Injustice and Deceit. Have we never felt our Conscience stinging us with a bitter Reflection derived from this Rule, when we have neglected in any Instance to fulfil our Duty to our Neighbour? I am sure if we keep it much in view, we could neither practise Injustice with Ease of Mind, nor dwell long under this Guilt, without some inward Reproaches: If the Precept had not Power enough to restrain us from present Sin, yet it would spur us on to serious and speedy Repentance.

[Here the Sermon may be divided, if it be too long to be read in a Family at once.]

VII. *It is a most extensive Rule, with regard to all the Stations, Ranks, and Characters of Mankind; for*  
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it is perfectly suited to them all : And I think it may be said, that 'tis *equally useful* to the Rich and the Poor, to the Buyer and the Seller, to the Prince and to the Peasant, to the Master and the Servant : They all come under the single Rule of Duty and Justice : This should govern them in all their Conduct. Be your Condition, O Christians, what it will in the World, do but put your selves into the Circumstances of one another, in your own Thoughts, for a Moment, and ask what is reasonable to be done to your selves ? and your Consciences will return a speedy and easy Answer what you should do to others.

Let the Tenant say, " If I were a Landlord, what should I think reasonable that my *Tenant* should pay me ? And the Landlord should ask himself, were I a *Tenant*, what should I claim of my *Landlord* ?" I would have the Master enquire, " What should I expect, if I were a *Servant*, at the Hands of my *Master* ?" And let the Servant say, " What, if I were a *Master*, should I expect from the Hands of one that *served* me ?" Parents should ask themselves, " If I had been a negligent *Child*, and guilty of some trifling Offence, could I think it just my *Father* should be in such a Passion with me ?" And the Son should enquire, " If I were a Father, would I not think it reasonable my *Child* should obey me in such particular Instances or Commands ?" Thus the Landlord and Tenant, thus the Master and Servant, thus the Father and the Son may come to an Adjustment of their mutual Obligations.

The *Merchant* should say to himself, " If I were an *Artificer*, should I think it reasonable that the Labour of my Hands, and the Sweat of my Brows, should be screw'd down to so cheap a Price ?" The *Seller* of Goods should say, " If I were the *Buyer*, would I think it just to have such corrupt or faulty Wares put into my Hands ?"

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"Am I willing to have my Necessity, my Ignorance, or Unwariness thus imposed upon?" And the *Buyer* should ask himself, "If I were the *Seller*, should I bear to have my Goods thus run down and depreciated below their just Value?"

The learned Professions may also learn their Duty from this Rule. The *Lawyer* should say to himself, "What if I were the *Client*, should I think it equitable to have my Cause so long delay'd by so many Shiftings and Escapes from a Determination?" The *Physicians* and the *Surgeons* should put themselves in the Places of their sick or wounded *Patients*, and say, "Do we prescribe never a Potion, or use never a Plaister more than we would think proper for ourselves, if we were languishing under the same Sickness or Wounds? Do we take the same safe and speedy Methods of Relief for others that we would have apply'd to our selves?" And the *Preachers* of the Gospel should place themselves in the room of their *Hearers*, and say, "Do we labour in our Closets, in our secret Hours of Retirement, and in our publick Ministrations, for the Conversion and Salvation of those who hear us, as we would have Ministers do for us, if we were perishing in our Sins, and in Danger of eternal Death? Do we take such Pains to awaken the Slumberers upon the Borders of Hell, as we ourselves would have others take, in order to awaken us out of such fatal Slumbers? Do we study and contrive with what divine Cordials we shall refresh and comfort the Mourners in *Zion*, even as we should desire to be comforted and refreshed?" Such sort of *Self-Enquiries* as these, will lead us to the Practice of our present Duty, and solve many a difficult Case of Conscience better than turning over the largest Volumes.

VIII. *This sacred Rule is a most comprehensive one, with regard to all the Actions and Duties that concern our Neighbours.* 'Tis not confin'd merely to the Practice of *Justice*, but it extends much wider and farther : It is of mighty Influence in the Direction and Practice of Meekness, of Patience, of Charity, of Truth and Faithfulness, and every kind of *social Virtue*, and a most happy Guard against every *social Vice*.

It would be endless to enter into all the special Cases of *Vice* and *Virtue*, which relate to the social Life, and to shew how much they are affected by this Rule, and what divine Advantages we may attain for the Practice of Morality, by keeping this one Sentence ever upon our Thoughts. Yet I cannot pass over so important a Theme, without giving a short Specimen of some of these Advantages.

This golden Precept would *teach us how to regulate our Temper and general Behaviour* in the World. Am I not willing to be treated in an affable and civil Manner by those who converse with me? Let me treat others then with all becoming Civility, and make it appear that Christianity is a Religion of true Honour, and that a Christian is indeed a well-bred Man. Do I think it unreasonable that my Neighbour, though he be my Superior, should assume haughty Airs and disdain me? Let me watch therefore against all such scornful Speeches and disdainful Airs, when I converse with one who is inferior to me. Do I think it a grievous thing, that a Man should break out into sudden Passion against me, if I happen to speak a Word contrary to his Sentiment, or to set himself in a Rage for a Trifle? Let me set a strict Guard then over all my passionate Powers, and learn to bear Opposition without Impatience. Let me quench the first Risings of sudden Anger, lest they kindle into an ungoverned Flame,



Flame, and hurry me on to the Practice of what I condemn in others.

This excellent Rule would *teach us Tenderneſs and Benificence to thoſe that are unhappy.* We ſhould never make a Jeſt of the Lame or the Blind, the Crooked or the Deformed; we ſhould never ridicule the natural Infirmities of the meanest of our Fellow-Creatures, nor their providential Diſadvantages, if we did but put ourſelves in the room of the Blind and Lame, the Deformed and the Poor, and ask whether we ſhould think it juſt and reaſonable to be made the Mockery and the Jeſt of thoſe that behold us. We ſhould certainly be inclined to viſit the Sick, and feed the Hungry, to give Drink to him that is a-thirſt, and to ſecure the Feeble and Helpleſs from the Oppreſſion of the Mighty, if we enquired of our own Hearts, what Treatment we ſhould expect if we were hungry and thirſty, if we were ſick and helpleſs.

This bleſſed Command of our Saviour would *incline us to reprove with Gentleneſs, to puniſh with Mercy, and never to cenſure others without a juſt Reaſon, and a plain Call of Providence;* for we ourſelves deſire and would reaſonably expect this ſort of Treatment from others. If we carry'd this Sentence always in our Memories, ſhould we blaze abroad ſcandalous Reports before we know the Truth of them? and publiſh doubtful Suſpicions of our Neighbour's Guilt? Should we blacken his Character to the utmoſt, even where there is a real Crime, and make no reaſonable Allowances for him? Should we perpetually teaze Children, Servants, or Friends with old Faults, and make their Follies and Miſcarriages the Matter of our delightful Converſation? Should we cenſure every little Deviation from the Truth, as Hereſy? Should we pronounce *Anathema's* and *Cuſes* upon him that leaves out of his Creed a few hard Words which Men have invented, or that differs from us in the Buſineſs of Meats, and

P 3

Days,

Days, and Ceremonies? We ourselves think it hard to have doubtful Reports of Evil publish'd concerning us, and Suspicions blown up into Guilt: We think it hard if our Crimes are aggravated to the utmost, and no reasonable Allowances are made: We find it very painful to us, and think it unreasonable to be ever teased with the mention of our former Follies, or to have our little Differences from another's Faith or Worship to be pronounced *Heresy*, and to be cut off from the Church for it.

In short, if this blessed Rule of our Saviour did but more universally obtain, we should never persecute one another for our Disagreement in Opinion, for we should then learn this Lesson, that another has as much Right to differ from me in his Sentiment, as I have to differ from him. If this Rule did but prevail amongst all that own the Christian Name, then Truth, Honesty and Justice, Meekness and Love would reign and triumph thro' all the Churches of Christ, and those vile Affections and Practices of Pride, Envy, Wrath, Cruelty, Backbiting, and Persecution would be banished for ever from amongst us.

IX. 'Tis not only a *Rule of Equity and Love* to direct our whole Conduct toward our Neighbours in the social Life, but it is also a *Rule of the highest Prudence with regard to our selves*; and it promotes our own Interest in the best manner: For if we make Conscience of treating our Neighbours according to all the Justice and Tenderness that this Rule will incline us to, we may reasonably expect the same kind and tender Treatment from those that are round about us. Such a Practice will naturally engage the greatest Part of Mankind on our Side, whensoever we happen to be assaulted or oppress'd by the Sons of Malice or Violence. Happy is that Person who has gained the Love of Mankind, by making the *Love of himself* a Rule and Measure of his Actions toward them,

them, and who has piously follow'd that Precept of the Law of God, *Love thy Neighbour as thy self.*

Let us remember that we live in a changeable World, and the Scenes of Life are continually shifting. I am now a Master, and in Possession of Riches, and if I treat my Servant, or any poor Man insolently, I may expect the like insolent Treatment if my Circumstances sink, and reduce me to a State of Poverty or Service. But if I follow this golden Rule of our Saviour, in treating my Inferiors, I do (as it were) hoard up for myself a Treasure of Merit and Benevolence amongst Men, which I may hope to receive and taste of, in the Day of my Necessity and Distress. Thus in behaving myself toward others according to this holy Rule of Friendship, I not only please and obey my God and my Saviour, but I happily secure my temporal Interests also.

X. In the *Last Place*, to mention no more, *This Rule is fitted to make the whole World as happy as the present State of Things will admit.* It is not to be described nor conceived what a Multitude of Blessings and Felicities the Practice of this single Precept would introduce among all Mankind.

If we were not thus wrapt up intirely in self, in our own Party, or in our own Kindred, but could look upon our Neighbours as our *other selves*, and seek their Advantage together with our own, every Man would become a diffusive Blessing amongst his Neighbours, and the mutual Benefits of Mankind would scatter Happiness through all the World. In such a beneficent State as this, every Man would be, as it were, a good Angel to all that came within the reach of his Commerce; this Earth would be a little Image of Heaven; and our present social Life amongst Men would be a Foretaste of our future Happiness among Saints and Angels. In those glorious Regions, every one rejoices in the Welfare of the whole Community, and they have a double Re-

lish of their own personal Blessedness, by the Pleasure they take in contributing to the Blessedness of all their Fellows.

Thus have I given a short and very imperfect Account of the Excellencies of this sacred *Rule of Equity and Love*, and named some of the Advantages it has above most other Precepts of Morality. It remains only that I make two or three Reflections on so agreeable a Subject.

*Reflection I.* In what a compendious Method has our Saviour provided for the Practice of all the moral Duties enjoyn'd by *Moses* and the *Prophets*! For he has summ'd them up in a very few Words, and reduced them to one short Rule; but the Extent and Comprehension of it is universal, and almost infinite. Though we should forget twenty particular Precepts of Love and Righteousness, yet if this be fresh in our Thoughts, and always ready at Hand, we shall practice all those particular Precepts effectually, by the meer Influence of this one general Rule.

'Tis true, 'tis a real Advantage toward our Practice of Virtue and Justice, to have the Mind stor'd with special Precepts, suited particularly to every Case; but where the Memory is defective, or other Rules are not learnt, this golden one will do very much towards supplying the Place of many. Our Saviour himself grants this Truth, when he says, *This is the Law and the Prophets.*

*Reflection II.* What divine Wisdom is manifested in making this golden *Rule of Equity* a fundamental Law, in the two most famous Religions that ever God appointed to the Children of Men; that is, the *Jewish* and the *Christian*! *Love thy Neighbour as thy self*, was a Rule appointed to the *Jews*, *Levit. xix. 18.* This is repeated by our Saviour, *Matt. xix. 19.* And an happy Explication or Comment on it given in



in my Text, *Whatsoever ye would that Men should do to you, do ye even so unto them ; for this is the Law and the Prophets.* There were none of the Heathen Philosophers that delivered this as a general Law, in so strong, so universal, and so comprehensive a Manner as our Saviour has done, though one or two of them offer'd some occasional Hints of the same Kind. But our Saviour appoints it as the *grand Rule of social Virtue*, amongst all the Subjects of his Kingdom ; and he tells us too, that this is the Sum and Substance of the Directions given by *Moses* and the *Prophets* for the Conduct of Men toward their Fellow-Creatures.

The Wisdom of this Precept eminently appears herein : Our blessed Lord well knew that *Self-love* would be a powerful Temptation to Men, to turn them aside from the sacred Laws of Justice, in treating their Neighbours ; and therefore he wisely takes this very Principle of *Self-love*, and joins it in the Consultation with our *Reason* and *Conscience*, how we should carry it toward our Fellow-Creatures. Thus by his divine Prudence, he constrains even this selfish and rebellious Principle to assist our Consciences and our rational Powers, in directing us how to practise the social Duties of Life.

It was *Christ* the Son of God who gave Laws to *Moses* for *Israel* before his Incarnation, and 'tis he who is come in the Flesh, as a Preacher of Righteousness to Men, in these latter Days ; and in both these Seasons of Legislature, he has manifested this sacred Wisdom. *Ye know the Heart of a Stranger,* (saith the Lord,\* in his Dictates to *Moses*) *Exod. xxiii. 9. For ye were Strangers in the Land of Egypt, therefore thou shalt not oppress a Stranger.* And he gives us still the same general Rule for our Conduct ;  
“ Look into your own Hearts, consider what human Nature is, you know you are Men of like  
“ Frailty with others, enquire what Treatment  
“ you would reasonably expect from your Fellows,  
“ and

“and be sure you practise in the same Manner to-  
ward them.”

*Reflection III.* Since the Wisdom of *Christ* thought fit to teach us Rules of Equity and Righteousness amongst Men, and has, as it were, extracted the very Soul and Spirit of all *social Duties*, and summ'd them up in this short Sentence: Let not the Disciples of *Christ* forget this Rule; nor let the most eminent and exalted Christians think it beneath their Study and their Practice. The *Love of God and Christ* is not the whole of our Duty, nor can we be Christians indeed, if we neglect to *love our Neighbour*. How vain are all our Pretences to Faith in *Christ*, and Piety toward *God*, if we grow careless in our Conduct toward *Men*? All our fancied Attainments in the School of *Christ*, how are they disgraced and destroyed, if we abandon this Rule of moral Virtue, and treat our Neighbours contrary to this divine Principle of Equity and Love.

What shall we answer in the great Judgment Day, to an enquiring God, when in flaming Fire he shall put us in Mind? “I gave you a plain and easy Rule of Righteousness in my Word, I wrote it in your Hearts also, in very legible Characters: If you had but look'd carefully unto your Consciences, you might have read it there: But you resolved to sacrifice all to your Lusts; you have wronged and defrauded your Brethren, and exposed your selves to my righteous Sentence, for your wilful Practise of Unrighteousness against so plain a Law.”

'Tis a just Remark which has been often made on this Occasion: “The *Heathen* Emperor *Severus* shall rise up in the Judgment with such a Generation of *Christians*, and condemn them: For he, by the Light of Nature, was taught highly to reverence this Precept,” when he had learnt it from the Professors of Christianity. You might read it  
upon

upon the Walls of his Palace, 'twas engraven there to govern his Court in the Times of Peace; and 'tis said, he carried it to War with him in the Banners of his Army, that it might regulate his Conduct, upon all military Occurrences.

What a Pity it is that *Severus* was a Heathen! Or rather, what a Shame and Sorrow it is, that there should be so few of this Character in the Courts, in the Armies, in the Markets, the Shops, and the Families of Christians! When will that blessed Day come, that shall bring this departed Glory back again to the Church of *Christ*? When shall the Spirit of Faith and Charity be poured down from on high, and Righteousness come from Heaven to dwell among us?

## THE RECOLLECTION.

Blessed Saviour, how great is thy Goodness, to give us so compleat, so plain, so easy, and so divine a Rule, to square all our Actions in the social Life! How happily hast thou comprized *Moses* and the *Prophets* in two short Lines, that is, the Command of a *supreme Love to the Lord our God, and a Love to our Neighbour like that which we bear to ourselves*?

Remember, O my Soul, this short and comprehensive Lesson; and amongst all thy Duties and Zeal toward thy God, forget not this Rule of Conduct toward thy Fellow-Creatures. I can never complain, 'tis too high and hard for my Understanding to apprehend, or too tiresome and painful for my Memory to retain, or too burthenfome to carry it about always with me. I am convinced, fully convinced of the Justice of it: It strikes upon my Conscience with strong Light and Evidence, and sometimes I feel the Force of it, like an inward Motive, awakening me to the Practice of all that it enjoins. O that I might ever live under its prevailing Influences,

fluences, and then I might humbly appeal to God, that I have transacted my Affairs with Men, by the Principles of sincere Godliness, Truth, and Justice.

Forgive, O my gracious God, all the wretched Instances of my Departure from this sacred Law of Equity. This sacred Law will awaken the Soul to Repentance, as well as direct it to Duty: And whatever Station of Life I am engaged in, whatever Rank, Character, Office, or Relation I bear in the World, or in the Church of *Christ*; let me form all my future Conduct by this Command of my Saviour, let me bring all my past Actions to this holy Test, and let my Conscience repent or rejoice.

O how bright a Lustre would be cast on the Religion of *Jesus*, and on all the Professors of it, if this Rule were always in use! But alas! it lies silent in our Bibles, and we hear it not; or it sleeps in our Bosoms and we awake it not, when we have most need of its Assistance. We read and we forget even this short Rule of Righteousness, and thus we practise Iniquity daily, and injure our Neighbours without Remorse. O wretched Creatures that we are! How great is our Negligence and our Guilt, that we don't so much as ask our Consciences honestly, how we should treat our Fellow-Creatures; but we ask our Lusts and our Passions, we enquire of our Ambition and Pride, our Covetousness, our Wrath and Revenge, how we should behave towards others.

Reflect, O my Soul, how often thou hast turned aside from this blessed Rule of thy Saviour, by consulting with the corrupt Principles of Flesh and Blood! How often hast thou neglected this holy Precept, to follow the vicious Customs of a sinful World, and a degenerate Age! A degenerate Age indeed, that has forgot the Practice of Truth and Love! Where shall we write this Rule in large and golden Letters, that the whole City might read it daily? Shall we engrave it on every Door, that all who pass by may see it? Shall it stand fix'd to every

Post



Post of the House, that it may direct all our domestick Conduct? Shall it meet us at the entrance of every Shop, and thus guard our Traffick from Iniquity, and sanctify all our Commerce? Shall we make a Philactery of it, and wear it on the Borders of our Garments, that we may never put it off, unless when we lie down to sleep, and cannot act? But the Spirit of *Christ* is the best Writer of his own golden Rule, and the Heart of Man is the best Table to receive and bear this Writing. O that the holy Spirit would write the sacred Law of Justice and Love more deeply, more effectually in all our Hearts, that the Religion of our Saviour might look like itself, all amiable and holy; and that while we give *Glory to God on high*, for his saving *Grace*, we might find *Peace and Truth* spreading through all the *Earth*, and *Good-will* multiply'd among the Children of *Men*. Thus the *Will of God* would be done on *Earth as it is in Heaven*, and the *Kingdom* of our Redeemer come in its expected Glory. *Amen. Even so come, Lord Jesus.*





# SERMON XXXIV.

The Atonement of CHRIST.

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ROM. iii. 25.

*Whom God hath set forth to be a Propitiation.*

**T**IS one of the chief Glories of the Gospel, that it discovers a full Atonement for Sin by the Blood of *Christ*, that it sets before us the Reconciliation of Sinners to an offended God, by the Death of his own Son. One would be ready to wonder, that any of the guilty Race of *Adam* should be unwilling to receive so divine a Discovery, or should refuse a Blessing so important.

But such unhappy Principles have prevail'd over the Minds of some Men, and particularly the *Soci-nians* in the last Age, that they have been content to venture their eternal Hopes on the Mercy of God, without a Dependence on the Satisfaction made for Sin, by *Jesus* the Saviour. They imagine *Christ* the Son of God came into our World chiefly to be a Teacher of Grace and Duty, to be an Example of Piety and Virtue, to plead with God for Sinners, and, in short, to do little more than any other divine Prophet might have been employ'd in, if the Wisdom of God had so appointed it. They suppose he  
yielded

yielded to Death that he might seal his Doctrine with his Blood, and might set us a glorious Pattern of suffering and dying, and then he led the Way to our Resurrection, by his own rising from the dead.

'Tis granted indeed, these are some of the Designs of the Coming of *Christ*, some of the necessary Parts of the blessed Gospel: But it seems to me, that this blessed Gospel is shamefully curtail'd, and depriv'd of some of its most important Designs and Honours, if a *proper Atonement* for Sin by the Blood of *Christ* be left out of it.

Forgive me, my Fellow-Christians, if I spend a Discourse or two on this great Article of our common Faith. I think it of so high Moment, that I would fain pronounce and publish it aloud in an Age that verges towards Infidelity; I would *glory in the Cross of Christ*, and endeavour to support this Doctrine with all my Power. O may none of those who wear the Christian Name, ever grow weary of it, or run back again to the mere Religion of Nature, as tho' we had no Gospel!

I shall not spin out my Thoughts, or employ yours in a laborious Enquiry into the Connection of the Words, but take them just as they lie, and make this plain Sentence the foundation of my Discourse.

Doct. *God hath set forth his Son, Jesus Christ, to be a Propitiation for the Sins of Men.*

When the Apostle says, God hath *set him forth*, *Christ* is plainly the Person intended: and this Greek Word *proistelo*, *set forth*, denotes either, (1.) That God hath foreordain'd and appointed his Son to become our Propitiation, by his divine Purpose in Eternity, which Purpose he executed here in Time: Or, (2.) It intends that God hath *set him forth*, i.e. proposed and offered him to the World as an Atonement for the Sins of those who trust in the Merit of his Death; for so the following Words intimate, *God set him forth for a Propitiation, thro' Faith in his Blood.*

*Blood.* I am not solicitous which of these Senses the Reader will chuse; either of them perfectly agrees with the Design of the Apostle.

I would just take a brief notice also, that some Interpreters transpose the Words of the Text a little, and read them thus, *Whom God hath set forth to be a Propitiation in his Blood through Faith*; and thus they suppose the Apostle, in this very Verse, declares that *Christ* aton'd for our Sins by his own Blood: And if this be the true Sense of it, it does but more effectually confirm the Design of my Doctrine, which is to shew that *Christ*, by his bloody Death, became a Sacrifice to God, in order to make Satisfaction for the Crimes of Men.

My Method of Discourse shall be this:

- I. To explain more at large the Manner in which I conceive *Christ* to become an Atonement or Propitiation for our Sins.
- II. To give some Reasons to prove, that he is ordained of God, and set forth or offered to the World under this Character. And,
- III. I shall shew what glorious use is made of this Doctrine throughout the whole Christian Life.

*First*, Let me explain the manner wherein *Christ* becomes an Atonement or Propitiation for Sin. And to render this Point easy to the lowest Understanding, I would draw it out into these Propositions.

*Prop. I.* The great God having made Man, appointed to govern him by a wise and righteous Law, wherein *Glory and Honour, Life and Immortality* are the designed Rewards for perfect Obedience; but *Tribulation and Wrath, Pain and Death*, are the appointed Recompence to Sinners who violate his Law.

This Law is, in a great measure, engraven on the Hearts and Consciences of all Men by Nature; at least



least the *general Precepts* of it are written in the Conscience: And Mankind, by the Light of Nature, has some Notion also of these Penalties, *viz.* the *Indignation and Wrath of God on those that do Evil.* And such as have enjoy'd the Benefit of divine Revelation, in *Patriarchal, Jewish, or Christian Times,* have had much clearer Discoveries thereof. This might be prov'd at large from the Discourse of St. Paul, *Rom. ii. 6, — 16.* compared with *Rom. i. 32.* The *Heathens* who are without the Law, have the *Work of the Law written in their Hearts,* and they know, or might know, that those who break it are *worthy of Death.*

*Prop. II.* All Mankind have broken the Law of God. *There is none Righteous; no, not one,* *Rom. iii. 10.* By sinning against God, we have lost all pretence to the Reward of Life, and Immortality, and Glory, *Rom. iii. 23.* *All have sinned and come short of the Glory of God:* And we have also subjected ourselves to Guilt and Punishment, *ver. 19.* *Every Mouth is stopped, and all the World becomes guilty before God.* A Sentence of *Wrath and Death* is passed upon all Men, for that all have sinned; and the best of Saints were by Nature dead in *Trespases and Sins,* and the *Children of Wrath* even as others, *Eph. ii. 1, 3.*

*Prop. III.* God in his infinite Wisdom did not think fit to pardon sinful Man, without some Compensation for his broken Law, some Recompence for the dishonour done to his Government. He did not see it proper to forgive all our Guilt without some Satisfaction for breaking his holy Commands. I will not enter into that curious Enquiry, Whether God, consider'd *absolutely as a Sovereign,* could have done it. It is enough for us that he hath, in effect, declared he would not do it, and that probably for such Reasons as these.

(1.) If the great Ruler of the World had pardoned the Sins of Men without any Satisfaction, then his Laws might have seemed not worth the vindicating. It might have been question'd, whether his Statutes were *so wisely contrived* and framed, as to deserve a Vindication, if he had freely forgiven all Rebels that had broken them, without any Consideration, without any Satisfaction at all. It becomes a wise Lawgiver to see that his Wisdom in framing his Laws, be not exposed to Dishonour; and therefore his Laws must be vindicated, when they are broken.

(2.) Men would have been tempted to persist in their Rebellions, and to repeat their old Offences continually, if there had been no Vindication of the Honour of the Law, nor any of the Threatnings of it had been executed. Therefore God requires a Satisfaction for his broken Commands, that his Subjects might be kept in due Obedience, by an awful Fear of his governing Justice. And 'tis on this Account, *viz.* to deter and affright Men from sinning, and breaking his Laws, he hath given them an Account in what a severe and terrible Manner he dealt with *Angels that sinned*, Jude 6. *He spared them not, but deliver'd them to Chains of Darkness until the Judgment of the great Day.*

(3) His Forms of Government among his Creatures might have appeared as a Matter of small Importance: His Threatnings might have been counted a trifling and useless Formality, and mere vain Terrors, if he had given Laws, and took no Care whether they were obey'd or no; and if he let those Creatures that broke them come off, without any Tokens of his Displeasure, without any Reparation of the Honour due to his Law and Government: Let not Sinners deceive themselves with vain Hopes, and dress up the Great God in their own Imaginations, as a Being of mere Mercy, as an Almighty Creator, that keeps no Discipline and Authority among his Creatures, Gal. vi. 7. *Be not deceived, God is not mocked:*

*mocked: He that soweth to the Flesh shall reap Destruction.*

(4.) God hath a Mind to make a very illustrious Display, both of his *Justice* and of his *Grace* among Mankind, which should be the solemn Spectacle and the Wonder of other Worlds besides this, even the World of Angels, Principalities and Powers; and therefore he hath designed his Grace and his Justice should mutually set forth each other, in his Transactions with sinful Man: On this Account he would not pardon Sin, without a Satisfaction; but he thought fit to require and demand that *Sin be punished*; and that the *Honour of the Law be repaired* to the full, that his Justice might shine in full Glory: And at the same time, in order to *display his rich Mercy*, he would find out a Way to *save Multitudes of these rebellious Creatures*.

These, and other Reasons, infinitely superiour to all our Thoughts, might be in the divine Mind; why God would not pardon Sinners without a Satisfaction.

*Prop. IV.* Man, poor sinful Man, is not able to make any Satisfaction to God for his own Sins, by his utmost Labours of future Obedience: For all that he can do for time to come, is but mere necessary Duty, if he had not sinned at all; and therefore this can never make any Recompence to the governing Justice of God, for his past Transgressions.

It is a most strange vain Doctrine of the *Papists*, that some Persons are such great Saints, that they do Works of heroick Virtue, beyond what they are required to do; and these they call *Works of Supererogation*, whereby they can merit some Favours at the Hands of God, not only for themselves, but for their Neighbours too. Strange Doctrine indeed, made up of Folly, Pride and Absurdity! Our best Services are so much due to God, that if any Man could practise compleat Righteousness, and fulfil the

Law of God constantly through all his Life, it would not make amends for one past Offence, nor merit any Favour of God for a criminal Creature.

But, alas! Man is so far from being able to fulfil perfect Righteousness for time to come, that in this fallen State, he can do nothing that is truly good: He broke the Law of God in Days past, and he goes on to break it daily and hourly. His Understanding is grown so dark, his Will so perverse, and his Affections and Appetites so corrupt and vicious, by his Departure from God, that he cannot answer the present Demands of Duty; much less can he bring an Offering of Righteousness to atone for past Iniquities. *We are by Nature dead in Trespasses and Sins.*

*Prop. V.* Neither can this guilty, wretched Creature *Man*, make any Satisfaction to the broken Law of God by his *Sufferings*, any more than by his *Doings*. For the Penalty of the Law is *Tribulation and Anguish of Soul and Body, the Wrath of God and Death*; and how far this dreadful Sentence reaches, what Miseries are imply'd in it, and how long the Execution of it must continue, who can tell? This we know, that God himself, who sees the full Evil, and compleat Desert or Demerit of Sin, hath, in some Places of Scripture, threaten'd eternal Punishment to Sinners.

And if we may venture to judge concerning the Greatness of the Guilt, and Demerit of our Offences against God, by the same Rules, by which Reason teaches us to judge of the Guilt and Demerit of an Offence against our Fellow-Creatures, we must say, *the Guilt of Sin is infinite*; and therefore the *Punishment* due to a sinning Creature is *everlasting*, because he cannot any other way sustain Punishment equal to his infinite Demerit of Sin. Among Men the Crime is always aggravated in Proportion to the Person, against whom it is committed: Therefore any Of-  
fence



fence against a *Father*, or a *King*, has much more Guilt in it, and is more severely punish'd, than the same Offence committed against an Inferior, or an Equal. An Attempt upon the Life of a Neighbour, is punished with Imprisonment or a Fine: but an Attempt made on the Life of a King deserves Death.

Now the *Great God*, our Creator, being a King of infinite Glory and Majesty, infinitely superior to his Creature Man, every Offence against this God, has a sort of *Infinity* in it\*: And God may demand Satisfaction equal to the Offence, that is infinite, which poor sinful Man can never pay, so as to out-live the Payment. On this Account, he is exposed to the Execution of the Sentence of God for ever: His Punishment has no end.

Perhaps this will be counted an old fashion'd Argument, and not so generally receiv'd in our Day, as it was in the Days of our Fathers: Therefore I have examin'd it afresh, with all the Skill I have, and having survey'd the Objections which are rais'd against it, I think they are not hard to be answer'd: And, after all, so far as I can judge in a way of Reasoning upon what Scripture has revealed, this Argument seems to have Weight and Strength in it still.

Were it not for the Supposition of the infinite Guilt and Demerit of Sin, I do not so plainly see the Justice or Equity of God, in preparing *everlasting Chains of Darkness, and eternal Fire, for the Devil and his Angels*, as a proper Punishment due to their first Act of Rebellion against him, and because *they kept*

\* Every Circumstance that aggravates any Crime, must aggravate it in a Degree proportionable to that Circumstance: otherwise we could never determine what is the Degree of this Aggravation, nor adjust the Punishment in Proportion to it. On this Account, if the Crime be committed against God, an infinite Being, the Guilt must be infinitely aggravated.

not their own first Estate †, Jude 6. Nor indeed, do I see such evident Reason, why Sinners among Men should be threaten'd with *eternal Punishments*, and punish'd with *everlasting Destruction*, as a *legal Penalty* due to past Sins, (*Mat. xxv. 46*, and *2 Thess. i. 9.*) which Sins were done perhaps in a few Days or Hours, unless upon a Supposition that all Offences committed against the infinite Majesty of God, have a Sort of infinite Demerit in them.

I beg leave to add this one Thought more, and that is, that if Sin has not a sort of infinite Demerit in it, I cannot see why Man himself, by some Years of penal Sufferings, might not make full Atonement for his own Sins: But the Language and Current of Scripture seems to represent sinful Man as for ever lost to all hope in himself, and then the Necessity of a Mediator appears with Evidence and Glory.

*Prop. VI.* Tho' Man be incapable to satisfy for his own Violation of the Law, either by his *Obedience* or his *Punishment*, and so to restore himself to the Favour of God, yet God would not suffer all Mankind to perish. Therefore out of his abundant Mercy, he appointed *his own Son* to undertake this Work.

His own, his only begotten Son, who is the *Brightness of his Father's Glory*, and who *lay in the Bosom of the Father* before all Worlds; his Son who was *one with the Father*, by a Communion of the Godhead; and who is himself, on this Account, called *God over all, blessed for ever*; this well beloved Son of God is

† I grant, (1.) That their continual Persistence and Obstinacy in sinful Practices, may *naturally* render them continually miserable; and, (2.) This continued Obstinacy may also, *in a legal Sense*, merit continual new Punishment: And, perhaps, on these two Reasons, the actual Eternity of Hell may be justly supported. But unless we suppose every wilful Rebellion against the infinite Majesty of God, to have also a sort of infinite Evil in it, I do not see that everlasting Chains, and eternal Fire, are a *proper deserved Punishment*, legally due to their first Rebellion, i. e. to one Act of Sin.

ordained

ordained and appointed to be the great Reconciler between God and Man.

*Prop. VII.* Because God intended to make a full Display of the Terrors of his *Justice*, and his divine Resentment for the Violation of his Law; therefore he appointed his own Son to satisfy for the Breach of it, by becoming a *proper Sacrifice of Expiation or Atonement*: Now, both among *Jews* and *Heathens*, the original Notion and Design of an *expiatory Sacrifice*, is, when some other Creature or Person is put in the Room or Place of the Transgressor, and the Punishment or Pain due to the Transgressor is transferred to that other Person or Creature. Therefore Beasts were slain for the Offences of Men, who were supposed to deserve Death. And when any Person became a Surety for a City or Nation that was defiled with Sin, among the *Heathens*, that Person was substituted in their Room, and so devoted to Death. So the Son of God became a Surety for sinful Men: It pleased the Father to make him their Sacrifice, and substituted him in their Stead: God ordained that he should put himself into their Circumstances, as far as was possible, with a due Condecency to his superior Character, and that he should sustain, as near as possible, the very same Pains and Penalties, which sinful Man had incurred. Since *Tribulation and Anguish of Soul and Body*, a Sense of the *Wrath of God* and Death, were the appointed Penalties of the Sin of Man; therefore he determined that his own Son should pass thro' all these: And since the Law *cursets* all *that continue not in all* the Commands of it, therefore *Christ was made a Curse for us*, that he might *redeem us from the Curse of the Law*, Gal. iii. 10, 13. Hereby he gave a most awful and sensible Demonstration, to this visible World of Mankind, (and, perhaps, much more to the invisible World of Angels and Devils) how dreadful a Thing 'tis to break the Law of a God, what infinite Evil is contained in

Sin, and at what a terrible Rate it must be expiated and atoned for!

*Prop. VIII.* The Son of God being immortal, could not sustain all these Penalties of the Law which Man had broken, without taking the mortal Nature of Man upon him, without assuming Flesh and Blood: Thus his *Incarnation* was necessary, that he might be a more proper Surety, Substitute, and Representative of Man who had sinned; and that he might be capable of suffering Pain, and Anguish, and Death itself, in the Room and Stead of sinful Men. 'Twas because the *Children who were given to Christ*, Heb. ii. 13, 14. *because these Children were Partakers of Flesh and Blood, therefore he himself also took part of the same, that through Death he might redeem them, that by his own dying he might make Atonement for their Sins*, Heb. x. 5. *Sacrifice and Offering of Beasts, thou wouldst not accept as an Equivalent for the Sins of Men: But a Body hast thou prepared me*, (saith our Lord) that Men might be redeemed by the *Offering of the Body of Christ once for all*, ver. 10.

'Twas in the Prospect of the Son of God becoming Man, by taking Flesh and Blood upon him, that God spake thus in Vision to David, Psal. lxxxix. 19. *I have exalted one chosen out of the People; i. e. out of Mankind: I have laid Help upon one that is mighty: And when he was found in fashion as a Man*, Phil. ii. *God laid on him the Iniquities of us all by Imputation*, Isa. liii. 5, 6: *even as the Sins, and Iniquities, and Trespasses of the Children of Israel were laid on the Head of the Goat of old, by the Confession and the Hand of Aaron*, Lev. xvi. 21.

When the Guilt was thus transferred to him, as far as 'twas possible for the Son of God to sustain it, he then became liable to Punishment; and indeed that seems to me to be the truest and justest Idea of *transferr'd or imputed Guilt*, (*viz.*) when a  
Surety



Surety is accepted to suffer in the room of the Offender, then the Pain or Penalty is due to him by Consent: And as this is the true Original and Foundation of expiatory Sacrifices, as I have shewn before, so this seems to be the Foundation of that particular Manner, wherein Scripture teaches us this Doctrine. *He that knew no Sin was made Sin for us, that we might be made the Righteousness of God in him,* 2 Cor. v. ult. *His own self bore our Sins in his own Body on the Tree,* 1 Pet. ii. 24. *The Chastisement or Punishment of our Peace was upon him, and by his Stripes we are healed,* Isa. liii. 5. And in many other Places of Scripture we read the same sort of Language. This Doctrine is supported with great Strength, by the most learned and pious Dr. Owen, in his short Treatise of the *Satisfaction of Christ*.

Upon this Account, though God the Father was never truly angry with his beloved Son, yet it pleased the Father to bruise him, when he stood in the room of guilty Creatures. The Father himself put him to Grief, and made his Soul and Offering for Sin, Isa. liii. 10. Then the Son of God began to be sore amaz'd, and very heavy at the approaching Deluge of this Sorrow, Mark xiv. 33. The Father forsook him for a Season, withdrew his comfortable Influences, and gave him some such exquisite Sight and Sense of that Indignation and Wrath that was due to Sin, as fill'd his holy Soul with Anguish, *his Soul was exceeding sorrowful even unto Death,* Matt. xxvi. 38. while his Body sweat Drops of Blood in the Garden: And at last he poured out his Soul to Death, and gave his Life a Ransom for many: he reconciled us to God by the Blood of his Cross, Col. i. 20.

Though we allow the human Nature of Christ to be the highest, the noblest, and best of Creatures, and in that Sense might be worth Ten Thousand of us; yet if Sin has an infinite Evil in it, then no meer Creature, by all his Sufferings, could make compleat and equal Satisfaction for Sin: But when the  
Son

Son of God, who is *one with the Father*, takes Flesh and Blood upon him, and becomes *God manifest in the Flesh*, here God and Man are united in one complex Person, and hereby we enjoy an all-sufficient Saviour, a Reconciler beyond all Exception, a Sacrifice of Atonement, equal to the Guilt of our Transgressions.

And so far as I can judge, 'tis on this Account one Apostle says, *Acts xx. 28. God redeemed the Church with his own Blood*; and another asserts, *Hereby perceive we the Love of God, that he laid down his Life for us*, 1 John iii. 16.

And I do not yet see sufficient Reason why that Expression of St. Paul, *Heb. ix. 14. may not be refer'd to the same Sense. How much more shall the Blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your Conscience, &c.* If the *eternal Spirit* signify the divine Nature or Godhead, which dwelt bodily in the Man Jesus, then the Dignity of his compleat Person is made the Foundation of the Value of his Blood. This Dignity of the Godhead which was personally united to the Man who suffer'd, spreads an infinite Value over his Sufferings and Merit: And this renders them equal to that infinite Guilt and Demerit of Sin, which would have extended the Punishment of Man to everlasting Ages. The infinite Dignity of the Person suffering, answers to the infinite Dignity of the Person offended, and so takes away the Necessity of the everlasting Duration of it.

Thus our blessed Mediator, the Man Jesus Christ, in whom dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, fulfilled the righteous Demands of the Law, and suffered the Penalties due to our Sins. He magnified his Father's Law in this manner, and made it honourable, beyond what all the Sons of Adam could do by their utmost Sufferings. Thus the Justice of God shines most glorious in the Sufferings of his Son Jesus Christ: Thus the great God vindicated his

own Character, as a wise and righteous Lawgiver before the Face of Men and Angels, in the Anguish and Death of his own Son: He gave a most awful and formidable Assurance, that he was not a God to be trifled with, and that the Sin of his Creatures should not go unpunished. *He that spared not his own Son,* when he stood in the room of Sinners, will never spare guilty Rebels that persist in their Rebellions. Thus far we see how *Christ* became a Sacrifice of Atonement.

*Prop. IX.* God, the great Ruler of the World, having received such ample Satisfaction for Sin, by the Sufferings of his own Son, can honourably forgive his Creature *Man*, who was the Transgressor. There is so glorious a Reparation made to the Honour of his righteous and broken Law, that he can pardon Sinners without dishonour to himself, and his Government. He can glorify his Justice and his Mercy at once, in a most exuberant and illustrious manner, since his own Son has become a Priest of Atonement, and offer'd up himself as a Sacrifice, to make *Propitiation for Sin*: He can declare his Righteousness, though he passes by a thousand Offences that are past, and can shew himself just to his own Law and Government, at the same time that he forgives Millions of Sins; and is a *Justifier of him who believeth in Jesus*, Rom. iii. 25, 26.

*Prop. X.* I might add in the last Place, since my Text intimates it, that as the great God in his eternal Counsels, appointed his Son *Jesus Christ* to undertake this difficult and glorious Work, for the Salvation of sinful Men, so in the Days of the Gospel, he has, in the most plain and explicate manner, offer'd this Reconciliation to Sinners who return to God by the Mediation of *Jesus Christ*: He has proposed Peace to those who are sincerely desirous to be reconciled to God, and to have all Enmity done away

way on both sides; to those who trust in the Virtue of the Blood of Christ, as the Foundation of this divine Peace between God and them, or in the Language of my Text, to those who have *Faith in his Blood*.

But let it be remembered, that this *Desire to be reconciled*, must proceed from a painful Sense of Sin, that makes a Separation between God and the Soul: This implies sincere Repentance in the Nature of it. It must be such a *Faith* in *Jesus* and his Sacrifice, as *works* powerfully by holy *Love*, and produces all the good Fruits of Religion in the Heart and Life. All Faith is useless to attain Peace with God, unless it carries in it the Springs and Seeds of Love and Holiness. Though we are *justified by Faith*, yet it must not be a meer bold Presumption, but a living Faith, which will appear in its Fruits.

Thus I have endeavour'd to perform the *first* thing I propos'd, and that was to shew in what manner I conceive of the Son of God becoming an *Atonement* for the Sins of Men. Far be it from me, to imagine that every one must believe these things just after the same Order, and in the same Manner in which I have learnt to conceive of them: Several learned and pious Men have explain'd the manner of this Atonement in another Way: But they agree in the Doctrine of a proper Satisfaction for Sin. Different Persons behold the Representation of these great and important Things of Christianity in different Lights: And though, according to my Measure of Knowledge in the Scripture, this manner of Conception of the *Atonement of Christ* seems most agreeable to the Word of God, yet, I am fully persuaded, God has never made Salvation to depend upon a nice Exactness of Sentiment about the meer Order of ranging these divine Discoveries, or about the precise logical Relations of the *Sufferings of Christ*, to our *Sins*, or to our *Pardon*. Whosoever sincerely confesses and repents of Sin, and trusts in the all-

sufficient



sufficient Atonement and Sacrifice of *Christ*, to remove the Guilt of it, has abundant Assurance from Scripture, that the *Blood of Jesus Christ will cleanse him from all Sin*, and that the Son of God has been, and will be his High-Priest, to reconcile him to God the Father.

## THE RECOLLECTION.

It becomes me now to reflect on what I have heard this Day. The Atonement of *Christ* is one of the chief Glories, and most surprizing Wonders of my Religion: 'Tis the Ground of my Hope, 'tis the very Life of my Soul.

Here I have been learning the several Transactions of the great God, the Creator and Ruler of the World, with all the Children of Men from the beginning of their Creation. The Light of Nature informs me in an imperfect manner, and the Scripture with much brighter Evidence assures me, that I was made under a Law, and not born to live at random, according to the wild Dictates of Appetite and Passion. I am inform'd also, my Creator has guarded the Honour of his Law with *Indignation and Wrath*, with *Pain* of the Flesh, and *Anguish* of the Mind, and *Death* itself, as the Penalties to be inflicted on those that break it. A Law divinely wise and righteous, and a Sanction of solemn and divine Terror!

But alas! I am one of the sinful guilty Race of Man. My very Nature is corrupt, my Powers of Action are unholy, and I have broken the Law of my God in a thousand Instances. My Conscience condemns me, *my Mouth is stopp'd, I am guilty before God*, I lie under the Sentence of his condemning Law *by Nature*, and am *by Nature a Child of Disobedience*, and a *Child of Wrath*. 'Tis a glorious Instance of divine Mercy and Forbearance, that he has not executed the Severities of his Law upon me  
long

long ago: 'Tis rich Mercy and adorable Patience that my Flesh and Spirit have not been fill'd with all these Terrors, that I am not made as wretched as I have been rebellious.

Nor can I expect, that the great and terrible God, who sent his Indignation upon *Angels when they sinned*, turned them out of Heaven, and *chained them in Darkness*, should forgive all my infinite Offences, without some Reparation made for the Honour of his broken Law. He is a great God indeed, his Majesty is tremendous, and every thing that belongs to him must have its Due of Honour.

If I labour with all my Powers to make him some Recompence for my past Iniquities by new Obedience, I find 'tis impossible. The best of my Righteousnesses are all defective: My holiest Services want some Forgiveness as well as my wilful Sins. Nor can I suffer the Punishment due to my Iniquities, without being for ever miserable. All the Doors of Hope are shut against me, nor by the utmost effort and Labour of my own Powers, can I find a Way to escape: If I am left to myself in this State, I must despair and perish.

But blessed, for ever blessed be the Mercy of my God, that he has sent his own Son to take Flesh and Blood upon him. He has *sent him in the Likeness of sinful Flesh to become a Sacrifice for Sin*, to sustain the Sorrows which I could never sustain, and to provide a Laver of his own Blood to cleanse us from all Sins. Lord, I humbly approach this sacred Laver, to wash away the Defilements of my Soul.

Christ is become a *Sacrifice* to divine Justice, in the Room and Stead of Men: And he is also our *great High Priest*: For he offer'd himself up to the Strokes of Justice, and the penal Demands of the Law of God, and thereby he hath shewn himself to be a Priest of Reconciliation. How adorable is this

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Contrivance! How amazing is this Love! How should Sinners be surprized with a Sense of this abounding Grace! Here I behold the Son of God stooping down from the Height of his Glory, to become a mortal Man, surrounded with Flesh and Sorrows: I behold the first Favourite of Heaven, the first beloved Son leaving the Bosom of his Father, and the Fulness of celestial Joys, that he might unite himself to our feeble Nature, and taste the Anguish and the smart that our Rebellions had deserved. I behold him forsaken of his Father, and lying under the Weight and Terror of some unknown Discoveries and Impressions of that divine Indignation and Wrath that was due to Sinners; unknown Impressions indeed, that struck the Son of God with *Amazement*, and made his *Soul exceeding sorrowful even to Death*.

And was all this for my Sins, O my Saviour? Didst thou sustain these heavy Sufferings from the Hand of God, that such a Rebel as I might be reconciled? Yes, all this for my Sins, if I am found a sincere Believer on the Son of God.

Enquire now, O my Soul, Dost thou believe in Christ? Hast thou seen thy heavy Guilt, and thy Danger of eternal Death? Hast thou been *wearied and heavy laden* with a Sense of thy past Iniquities? Hast thou been pained at Heart under the present Power of indwelling Sin? And hast thou *fled for Refuge to the Hope set before thee* in the Gospel? Hast thou joyfully received *Jesus the Saviour by Faith in his Blood*? by a living and active Faith? Hast thou committed thy self to him, to be delivered from the reign of Sin, as well as from the Condemnation of it? Then mayst thou join with the blessed Apostle, and speak in the Language of Faith, *He loved me, and gave himself for me*.

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Let me meditate again the Sorrows and Agonies of my dear, my adored Redeemer. Infinite Agonies and Sorrows, beyond all the Powers of Language. Is my Heart made of Stone, that it can hear such an History and not melt within me! Have I no tender Part within me, to bleed at the Rehearsal of such Anguish, and such Love! Blessed *Jesus*, smite the Rock of my Heart, and let it pour out new Streams of Repentance and affectionate Gratitude. I was dead, and the Son of God gave himself up to Death, in order to raise me to Life again. I was a Traitor and an Enemy; and he hath sustained the *Arrows of the Almighty* to reconcile me to his Father, and turn away his infinite Indignation. My great High Priest has offer'd up himself a bloody Sacrifice for me, that my Guilt might be forgiven, and cancelled for ever.

Think, O my Soul, study, contrive, speak, what wilt thou render to the Lord for such astonishing Condescension, and such unexampled Grace. How wilt thou shew thy inestimable Value of his Atonement? What does he require of thee, but to keep those Garments clean, which he has washed in so rich a Fountain as his own Blood? And shall I ever wilfully indulge the Practice of Sin again, and return to my old Defilements? Shall I ever consent to break the Law of my God? Have I not seen the dreadful Nature and dismal Effects of it, in the Agonies and Death of my dearest Lord? What shall I do that I may never sin more? Lord, I cannot preserve myself from the fatal Infection, while I dwell in a World where Sin reigns all around me, in a *World that lies in Wickedness*; and while I am so nearly allied to Flesh and Blood, where Folly, Vice, and Sin run through every Vein to my Heart. *Jesus*, I commit myself afresh to thy Care, thou wilt save the Soul that thou hast purchased at so dear a Rate; thou



thou wilt accept and save a returning Penitent. Here I devote my Life, my Self, my Flesh and Spirit, and all my Powers to thy Obedience, and the Purposes of thy Glory for ever and ever: My Soul looks up to thee with an Eye of humble Confidence, and my Faith and Hope rest on thy everlasting Love. *Amen.*





# SERMON XXXV.

The Atonement of CHRIST.

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ROM. iii. 25.

*Whom God hath set forth to be a Propitiation.*

**H**AVING explained the *Manner in which Christ is a Propitiation for Sin*; I come in the *second Place* to propose some *Reasons* to evince the Truth of this Doctrine, viz. That God hath ordained his Son *Jesus* to be our Propitiation or Sacrifice of Atonement. And here I shall proceed by Degrees, from some apparent Probabilities, to more evident and convincing Proofs.

I. The first Reason I shall give for it is this, that *an Atonement for Sin, and an effectual Method to answer the Demands of an offended God, is the first great Blessing which guilty Mankind stood in need of; but the Powers of Nature could never procure it, nor could the Light of Reason ever shew them how to obtain it: Now 'tis the Design of the Gospel of Christ to supply the Wants and Deficiencies of guilty Nature, that is both impotent and blind; 'tis to introduce an effectual Reconciliation between God and Sinners; 'tis to point out an Atonement to them, answerable to their Guilt, which they wanted, and to discover a solid Foundation for Peace. This is done in the Death of Christ.*

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A few easy Reflections of natural Conscience, will acquaint all the thinking Part of Men that *they are Sinners*, that they have offended the great and glorious God who made them : And those that have read the Histories of Mankind, and have surveyed distant Nations and past Ages, have found this to be almost the universal Enquiry of Men, *what shall we do to pacify the Anger of that God, against whom we have sinned ?* The Heathen World had an awful Notion of the Vengeance of Heaven. Hence arose endless Forms of Superstition : How many long and costly Ceremonies, what painful and bloody Rites of Worship have been invented and practised by Men, to make some Compensation for their Crimes ? All the Craft and Contrivance of their Priests, could never have prevail'd with the Bulk of Mankind, to take such Yokes of Bondage upon them, if there had not been something in natural Conscience, which wanted an Atonement and Peace to be made with Heaven, from a Sense of their own Guilt.

The Prophet *Micah* introduces this general Language of an awakened Conscience, *Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, or bow myself before the most high God ? Shall I come before him with Burnt Offerings ? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of Rams, or with ten thousands of Rivers of Oil ? Shall I give my First-born for my Transgression ? The Fruit of my Body for the Sin of my Soul ?* Micah vi. 6. Alas ! All these are vain and fruitless Proposals : But the Gospel makes the enquiring Conscience easy, when it proposes the Blood of the Son of God, appointed by the Father as a satisfactory Offering for the Sins of Men : This is what the guilty World wanted, but could never find out. This the Gospel hath revealed and set in an open Light.

And indeed, if the great God who is offended, did ever send down a Peace-maker to reconcile Heaven and Earth, it is very reasonable to suppose that he should answer the universal Cry of Nature di-

stressed with Guilt; and that he should furnish sinful Creatures with such an Atonement for Sin, and such a solid Foundation for their Acceptance with himself, as might fully satisfy their Reason and their awakened Consciences. And this is no where to be found in so evident and so compleat a manner, as in the Death of *Christ*.

II. *The very first Discoveries of Grace, which were made to Man after his Fall, imply'd in them something of an Atonement for Sin, and pointed to the Propitiation which Christ has now made, Gen. iii. 15, &c.* The first Appearance of Grace was the Promise given, that the *Seed of the Woman should bruise the Head of the Serpent*, that is, he should abolish the Guilt, Mischief, and Misery that Sin and the Tempter had introduced: But in order to do this, the *Woman's Seed* must have his *Heel bruised*, must sustain some personal Sufferings.

Immediately after this, *Sacrifices of Beasts* were instituted \* as a Type and Prefiguration of some future glorious Sacrifice and Atonement that should be made to God for the Sins of Men.

Now 'tis the very Notion of an *expiatory Sacrifice*, as I have shewn before, that some Creature is provided to stand in the room of the original Trans-

\* Though we have no express Revelation in Scripture, that Sacrifices were now instituted, yet there is abundant Reason to believe it: For, (1.) *Abel* offered bloody Sacrifices. Now we can hardly suppose that *Adam* or *Abel* would ever invent such a strange Ceremony to please God with it: Nor could Reason ever dictate to them, that God, their Creator, would be pleased with such a bloody Practice, as cutting his living Creatures to Pieces, and then burning them with Fire. Nor would God, who is so jealous of his Prerogative in matters of Worship, ever have shewn his Acceptance of these Rites, if he himself had not appointed them. (2.) Though we don't read that *Adam* offer'd Sacrifice, yet 'tis plain he was not permitted to eat Flesh; and therefore 'tis more probable, that when he killed Beasts, it was for Sacrifices: And God taught him to make Cloathing for himself out of their Skins. This was immediately after the Fall.

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gressor, and to bear his Guilt and suffer Punishment in his stead, that thereby the Transgressor having his Guilt taken away, may be deliver'd and sav'd. And when *Adam* was ordered to put a Beast to death which *had not sinned*, in order to worship or honour God by it, and when he found that he himself who *had sinned*, was not put to death, 'twas not hard for him to understand that the Beast was put to death in his room and stead: And 'tis not unlikely that God told him so.

Let us consider further, that 'tis exceeding probable, when the *Lord God made Coats of Skins for Adam and his Wife*, these were the Skins of the Beasts that had been put to death in Sacrifice: And thus God made it appear to them, that their *Nakedness* was cover'd, and the Shame of their Guilt removed, by a Blessing deriv'd from the Beasts that were slain. The Skins of the Sacrifices being put upon their Bodies, might abate something of their former Fear, and encourage them to appear before God, who were terrified a little before, at the Thoughts of their Guilt and Nakedness. Their deserved Death was transferr'd to the sacrificed Animal; and the Skin of the Animal sacrificed, was transferr'd to them as a Covering for their Guilt and Shame. These are no obscure Intimations of Benefit and Safety to be deriv'd to Sinners, from some Atonement to be made for Sin.

If we will hearken to *St. Paul*, he explains the first Promise, when he says, that *Christ took Flesh and Blood upon him, that he might, by his own Death, destroy the Devil, who had the Power of Death, or had introduc'd it into the World.* Here the Saviour's *Heel was bruised*, and the *Head of the Serpent broken*; nor can it be well supposed, how the *Death of Christ* should destroy the Works of the Devil, but by making an Atonement for the Sins of Men; for which Sins divine Justice had put them under his Power or Tyranny.

I will not presume to say, that *Adam* himself could read so much Gospel as this in those *first Words of Promise*; or that he knew in so explicit and distinct a manner, the Designs and Ends of a *Sacrifice*, when God taught him the Practice: Yet 'tis very probable, that the great God condescended to give a much farther Explication both of the first Words of Comfort concerning the *Seed of the Woman*, and of his own Appointment of *Sacrifices*, and of the Reason of them, than *Moses* has written, or than we who live at this distance of Time can ever certainly know.

III. Suppose what I have yet offer'd, be too obscure a Foundation for this Doctrine, yet let us consider that the *following Train of Ceremonies, which were appointed by God in the Jewish Church*, (when he separated a peculiar People to himself) are plain Significations of such an Atonement for Sin as our Lord *Jesus* has made, and they confirm the Meaning of the first Institution of Sacrifices.

I will grant indeed, that many of the Ceremonies of the *Jewish Church*, had also some other Intentments, viz. To distinguish the Nation of *Israel* from the *Gentile World*, and to keep them in Subjection to God, who was their *political Head* or *King*, as well as their *God*, to preserve them as a Nation in his Favour, and restore them when they had offended him as their Governor and King: But a few Considerations will give us sufficient Evidence, that these are but mere subordinate Designs of God in the *Jewish Law*, and especially in his Institution of the Ceremonies of Atonement and Priesthood.

*1st Consideration.* The *Jewish Ceremonies* are often represented as Types or Figures of Gospel-blessings by the Apostle *Paul*, 2 Cor. iii. Gal. vi. Col. ii. Heb. vii, viii, ix, x. The *Levitical* ceremonial Rites were but the *Letter*, of which the Gospel of Christ is the Spirit or Meaning: Those were but as a *Vail* to cover the good Things of the Gospel; they were but

but weak and poor Rudiments or Elements of Learning, to lead us into the Knowledge of Gospel-Blessings. The *Law was our Schoolmaster to bring us to Christ*. They were but a *Shadow of Things to come*, whose Substance or Body is Christ: They served but to the Example and Shadow of heavenly Things, i. e. The Things of the Gospel: They were a Figure for the Time present; a Shadow of those good Things to come, which the Holy Ghost signified by them. The great End of these Jewish ceremonial Appointments, in the Sense of this inspired Writer, was, that they should stand but as Types and Figures of Things under the Gospel; as Emblems of the various Offices of the *Messiah* that was to come, and eminently of his Priesthood and Propitiation. Now the Substance is superior to the Shadow.

2d Consideration. This is more evident still, if we consider that many of the Defilements which were to be remov'd by these Sacrifices and Purifications, were of an external and corporeal Nature, which, consider'd in themselves, were generally innocent as to moral Guilt, and did not want such sort of bloody Purgations\*. Thence we may reasonably infer, that these external Defilements of the Body, did typify and represent the moral and sinful Pollutions of the Soul;

\* It may be worthy our Notice here, that *Blood* is no very proper Liquid for Purification of any Defilements, unless it be, as it represents *Death* to be an Atonement for the Guilt of Sin, which is a moral Defilement of the Soul. And yet, *Heb. ix. 22. Almost all Things under the Law are purged by Blood*: One would think *Water* should be a much better Cleanser? But we find this purging or cleansing signifies Atonement for Sin, when the very next Words give us the Reason why Blood is appointed, viz. because Pardon or Remission is the Thing sought; for without shedding of Blood is no Remission.

'Tis plain therefore, that to a guilty and defiled Soul or Conscience, every thing is defiled, as *Tit. i. 15*. But when both the People and their sacred Utensils were sprinkled with Blood, it denotes, that all things are sanctify'd and pure, to those whose Souls partake of the Atonement of Christ, and whose sins are remitted through his bloody Death.

and consequently, that the *external and corporeal Forms of Atonement and Purgation* were chiefly designed as *Types and Figures of the Blood of Christ*, which was a real Propitiation for the Sins of the Soul.

*3d Consideration.* The most exact and happy Resemblance and Conformity, between the Method of Atonement by the Priesthood and Sacrifice of *Christ*, and the appointed Rites of *Levitical* Priesthood and Atonement, very naturally leads us to suppose, that one was design'd to figure out and foretel the other; especially since the Scripture gives us such frequent Hints of it. The great God, to whom all his own Works are known from the Beginning of the World, had the Sacrifice and Priesthood of his Son Jesus ever in his Eye, when he ordain'd the *Jewish* Forms of Atonement. He kept in view the *Blood of Christ*, which was to be shed for our Sins, when he appointed the Shedding of the *Blood of Bulls and Goats*. He kept in view *Jesus the High Priest*, who was hereafter to enter into Heaven in the Vertue of his own Blood, when he appointed *Aaron* to go into the *holy Place*, (*the Figure of the True*) with the Blood of the yearly Expiation. He kept in view the *Merit of Christ's Death*, which was to be apply'd to our Souls and Consciences by Faith, when he appointed the People to be *sprinkled with the Blood* of the Sacrifices: And therefore the Blood of *Christ* is called the *Blood of Sprinkling*, Heb. xii. And when he ordain'd the Morning and Evening *Lamb* for a continual *Burnt-Offering*; he pointed (tho' afar off) to the *Messiah, the Lamb of God*, that must take away the Sins of Men.

These Resemblances might be shewn in a Multitude of other Instances; but I cannot omit this one, viz. As the killing of the Beast was designed to hold forth the violent and bloody Death of Christ, the great Sacrifice; so the Burning of the Flesh and Entrails on the Altar by that divine Fire, which was always kept alive there, and which was kindled at first from Heaven



ven, seems plainly intended to foretel those sacred divine Impressions of the Indignation of God due to Sinners, which were to be made upon the holy Soul of *Christ* himself, when it pleased the Father to bruise him, and put him to grief: For the Indignation of God is often represented by *Fire*.

We must not imagine therefore, that these *Levitical Ordinances* were first in the Design of God, as proper Statutes for the *Jewish Nation*, and then that the *Son of God* came into the World, and pass thro' such special Scenes of Life, Death, and Resurrection, merely in order to copy out these *Jewish Ordinances*: But we must conceive the *Son of God*, first design'd as our great Atonement and High Priest on Earth, and in Heaven: And in the View and Foresight hereof, all those *Levitical Ordinances* were given to the *Jews* as Figures and Emblems, to give early Notice before-hand, of the Blessings of the great *Messiah*. Surely the Atonement of the *Messiah*, which was to be a real Relief for the Guilt of all Nations, was of much more Importance, and held a higher Rank in the Ideas and Designs of God, than the mere Ceremonies given to a single Nation.

If it should be objected still, that those *Jewish Rites* have been plainly prov'd by some learned Men to be *political Services* done to God as their King and Governor, for he dwelt in *Jerusalem* as their King, and kept his Court among them in the Tabernacle and the Temple.

I answer, (1.) This may very well be granted as an inferior and subordinate Design of God: For the Consideration of God, as the *Civil or Political Ruler* of the *Jewish Nation*, is much inferior to the Consideration of him as the *Creator, and the Lord* of the *Souls and Consciences*, not only of the Nation of *Israel*, but of all Mankind, who were to derive Benefit from the Sacrifice of *Christ*. The supreme Intent and Meaning of any Constitution, does by no means destroy those which are subordinate.

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It may be allow'd also, (2.) That the Sacrifices duly offer'd, did make a *real and proper Atonement* for the political Guilt of the *Israelites* in the Sight of God, consider'd as their peculiar *King*, and continued them in his political Favour, or restor'd them to it, after some Breach of the *Jewish Laws*. This seems to be the Sense of the Apostle, *Heb. ix. 13. The Blood of Bulls and Goats sanctifies to the purifying of the Flesh*, as well as of many Expressions in the Books of *Moses*. And yet these same Sacrifices might make a *typical Atonement* for their moral Guilt in the Sight of God, consider'd as *their God*, i. e. as the Lord of Conscience, and the God of the Souls of Men: And all this with a direct Aspect upon the Sacrifice of Christ, the great and real Atonement that was to come: And indeed, the next Words, *Heb. ix. 14. intimate so much, How much more shall the Blood of Christ purge your Consciences from dead Works? i. e. from Works of Sin*, which deserve Death in the Sight or Judgment of God, consider'd as the supreme Lord of Souls and Consciences.

These Sacrifices (I say) could make but a *typical Atonement for moral Guilt* in the Sight of God, consider'd as their God; for 'tis sufficiently evident to any thinking Mind, that it *was not possible for the Blood of Bulls and Goats to take away Sin* as committed against a God, *Heb. x. 4.* And therefore the *Jews* themselves, when they had offer'd their chief Sacrifice of yearly Expiation, had not so clear, so full, and so satisfactory a Peace in their Consciences, as the Gospel of *Christ* bestows on Christians: The Apostle says, *ver. 1, 2. the Comers thereunto were not made perfect*; for if they had, *the Worshipers once purged would have no more Conscience of Sin*, or Sense of Guilt. *Wherefore*, when Christ came into the World, *he saith, Sacrifice and Offering* (that is of Bulls and Goats) *thou wouldst not*, for they were not sufficient, but *a Body hast thou prepared me*; and for what end it was done, the following Verses tell us, that Sin-

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ners might be *purified* from the Guilty Defilements of Sin, *through the Offering of the Body of Jesus Christ once for all*, ver. 10.

Thus the Blessed God, who designed in due Time to make his own Son an Atonement for Sinners, did early give some emblematical Notices of this divine Atonement to those few who were taught to understand them: And in this Manner he kept alive in the World the Hope of some such glorious future Transaction, which should be the Ground-work of Peace between God and Men, by the appointed Death and Sacrifice of Beasts throughout all Ages, ever since he made the first Promise, and gave the first Hope of Grace to fallen Men.

And indeed, all the Souls that were pardoned, and all the Sins that were remitted under the several ancient Dispensations of *Adam, Noab, Abraham, and Moses*, must be referr'd to the Virtue of this great Sacrifice of the Son of God, though all who were pardoned might not distinctly know the ground of it. *Him bath God set forth to be a Propitiation for the Remission of Sins that are past* in far distant Ages, as well as for Sins that are yet to come. His Sacrifice has a most extensive Efficacy, it reaches through all Nations, and all Ages, from the Beginning of the World to the End of it. 'Twas this Sacrifice of *Christ* that gave Virtue to all other Institutions and Rights of Atonement that were appointed by God himself. In themselves they were weak and insufficient, but they were made powerful thro' the Blood of *Christ*, to speak Pardon and Peace, in some Measure, to the guilty Conscience, though since Christ is come, we hear the joyful Sound of Peace and Pardon much more distinctly.

IV. Nor was this Doctrine manifested only in the ancient *Forms of Worship* and Sacrifice which God had ordained, but some of the *noblest of the following Prophecies* confirm and explain the *first Promise*, and shew that

that *Christ was to die as an atoning Sacrifice for the Sins of Men*. I'll mention only the Words of those two great Men, *Isaiah* and *Daniel*. By *Daniel* we are told, that the *Messiah shall be cut off, but not for himself*; and the Design of this is, *to finish Transgression, to make an End of Sin, to make Reconciliation for Iniquity, and to bring in everlasting Righteousness*, Dan. ix. 24, 26. *Isaiah* speaks the same Thing more largely, in his 53d Chapter, *Christ was wounded for our Transgressions, he was bruised for our Iniquities, the Chastisement of our Peace was upon him, and by his Stripes we are healed: We like sheep have gone astray, and the Lord hath laid on him the Iniquity of us all. It pleased the Lord to bruise him, and to put him to Grief, and to make his Soul an Offering for Sin. By the Knowledge of him shall be justify many, for he shall bear their Iniquities*. How exceeding plain and strong is this Language to support my Doctrine, and how exceeding hard to construe it to any other Sense!

It may not be amiss to subjoin the Witness of *John* the Baptist, who was *more than a Prophet*, and the very Forerunner of the *Messiah*, John i. 29. *Behold the Lamb of God who taketh away the Sin of the World*. Now a Lamb takes away Sin in no other way than by dying as a Sacrifice.

Thus our blessed Redeemer who, *once in the End of the World, appear'd to put away Sin by the Sacrifice of himself*, as a great High Priest, was, as it were, usher'd into his Office by a long Train of Types and Prophecies: All these went before him, that when his great Sacrifice was offer'd, it might not seem a strange Thing, but might be more easily received by all the World, who stood in so much need of him, and to whom the Tradition of Sacrifices had been convey'd from *Noah*; and especially by the *Jews*, who had so much Notice of him before, by more express Revelations beyond what the *Heathens* could learn by their broken Traditions of Sacrifice.



V. Our Saviour himself, among the rest of his Ministrations as a Prophet, taught us the Doctrine of Atonement for Sin by his Death, and that in these three Ways.

1. He did speak of it (though but sparingly) in plain and express Language to his own Disciples in private, Matt. xx. 28. *The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his Life a Ransom for many*: And this he spoke a little after he had foretold his own Sufferings, his Crucifixion, his Death, and his rising again the third Day.

2. He preached this Doctrine publickly to the Multitude in Parables and Figures of Speech, John vi. 51. *The Bread that I will give is my Flesh, which I will give for the Life of the World. Except ye eat the Flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his Blood, ye have no Life in you*: Which can signify nothing but his dying as a Propitiation for Sin, that we might live by our feeding upon his Sacrifice, or partaking the Benefit of it. John xii. 24. *The Hour is come that the Son of Man must be glorified. Except a Corn of Wheat fall into the Ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much Fruit*, ver. 32. *If I be lifted up from the Earth I will draw all Men unto me*: This he said, signifying what Death he should die. His being lifted up on the Cross should draw many Souls to him as their Way to the Favour of God. Once he spoke it in a little plainer Language, in publick, John x. where he represents himself as the good Shepherd, who lays down his Life for his Sheep.

3. He taught the same Doctrine both in Types or Emblems, and in plain Language, just before he died, at the Institution of the holy Supper. Luke xxii. 19. *He took Bread and brake it, saying, This is my Body which is given for you. And of the Cup he said, This Cup is the New Testament in my Blood which is shed for you; or as St. Matthew expresses it, This is my Blood of the New Testament which is shed for many, for the Remission of*

of Sins. These Things put together, make it evident that Christ himself taught this Doctrine.

*Object.* But it will be said, How can we suppose that this Doctrine of Atonement by the Death of Christ, should be so considerable a Part of the Gospel, if our blessed Redeemer, the great Prophet of his Church, spoke so seldom of it in publick; and that in so obscure a Manner?

*Answer.* 1. This Doctrine of Atonement for Sin by his Death, and the Acceptance of it with God the Father, could not be so well preached in publick 'till he died, and rose again; for his Death was the Foundation of this Atonement; his Resurrection and his Ascension to Heaven were the Proofs of its being accepted of God. Now 'twas divinely wise and proper for our Lord not to preach such Doctrines too freely in publick to the Multitude, 'till these Events should appear in the World. If he had spoken all these Things concerning himself, it would have probably amazed and confounded the common People, and raised their Rage or their Ridicule; so ignorant and so full of Prejudice as they were in that Day.

*Answer.* 2. If Christ had publickly and plainly preach'd up the Atonement of his Death, he must thereby have foretold openly that he must die as a Sacrifice; and this might have had very ill Effects on the malicious Jews, either (1.) To provoke them to kill him before his Hour was come, and pretend that they only obey'd his own Prophecy and Commission when they put him to Death: Or, (2.) They might lay hold on him, and keep him Prisoner without killing him, to endeavour to falsify his Prophecies of his Death, and thus attempt to make void his Doctrine of Atonement.

'Tis true, God, by his immediate Influence on the Wills of Men, could have prevented these Effects: But 'tis not the Manner of God's Conduct in Providence to answer and accomplish his own Predictions by such immediate, divine, and over-ruling Restraints

straints upon the Wills of Men, if it may be done otherwise. And therefore indeed, the Prophecies, and especially such as are to be accomplished in the same Age in which they are spoken, are usually given forth in Metaphors and Parables, that Men may not so clearly and perfectly understand them, and that God, in his moral Government of the World, may not be constrained to go out of his common and ordinary Methods, in order to bring these Prophecies to pass.

*Ans. 3.* 'Tis evident, from many Expressions in the Evangelists, that it was not the Design of Christ, in his own Life-time, to publish the Grace and Glory of the Gospel, in so clear, so distinct and so compleat a Manner, as he design'd to have it publish'd by his Apostles after he was gone to Heaven. The Design of his own publick Ministry was rather to *prepare the Way* for the setting up of his own Kingdom in the World, than to set it up in the full Glory of it in his own Person. According to this View of Things, his *Preaching* was formed, *Repent ye, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand*, i. e. The Gospel State approaches, or hath approached to you. The *Prayer* he taught his Disciples stands on the same Foot, wherein they are instructed to pray, *Thy Kingdom come*.

Therefore when he spake to the Multitude, of the special Glories of his Gospel, and especially of his atoning Sacrifice, 'twas generally in Parables; and when he instructed his Disciples more particularly in private, he gave them but Hints of it, and told them, that they should *publish* these Things upon the *House-tops* after the Son of Man should rise from the Dead, but not before.

Even just before his Death, his own Disciples themselves could not bear many Things that he had to teach them, John xvi. 12. These Things were reserv'd therefore for the forty Days Communication with them, after his Resurrection, when he spake with them

them of *Things pertaining to the Kingdom of God*, Acts i. 3. and more especially for the Teachings of his own Spirit, which he poured out upon them after he went to Heaven. By these Means they were more compleatly furnish'd for their Ministry, and learnt the Doctrines of the Gospel, in a more perfect Manner than ever our Lord himself taught them in his Life-time.

Thus it appears, that though *Christ* was the Founder of a new Religion among Men, yet there is good Reason to be given, why he did not teach plainly and publickly some of the chief Doctrines of this Religion, during his own Life on Earth, *viz.* because these Doctrines were built on his Death, his rising again, and ascending to Heaven, which Events were then unaccomplished \*.

Thence we may infer, as we pass along, that if we would learn the plainest and fullest Account of the Gospel of *Christ*, 'tis not enough for us to consult merely his publick Sermons, or the Histories of his Life, which are called *the Four Gospels*, but we must read carefully the Writings of the Apostles after he went to Heaven; for, during the Life of *Christ*, neither did he preach, nor did the Apostles themselves learn this Gospel in the compleat Extent and Glory of it. But this is only an Inference by the way †.

Let us proceed to the next *Reason* to prove that *Christ* was a Propitiation for our Sins in his Death.

#### VI. *The Terrors of Soul, the Consternation and inward Agonies which our blessed Lord sustain'd a little*

\* I grant there are some other ingenious and probable Reasons offer'd by the Author of *Miscellanea Sacra*, why *Christ* did not communicate his Gospel so compleatly to his Disciples in his own Life-time. *Essay* i. p. 156, 7, 8, 9. but what I have mentioned is sufficient for my Purpose.

† This is a proper Pause in the Middle of the thirty fifth Sermon.

*before*



before his Death, were a sufficient Proof that he endur'd Punishments in his Soul which were due to Sin. These were vastly greater than the Persecutions of bloody Men, and the meer Fears of dying: Can it ever be imagined, that the Son of God, whose Virtues and Graces, whose Patience and holy Fortitude sparkled with a divine Lustre in the various Parts of his Life, should have shewn so much natural Fear, and innocent Disquietude of Spirit, at the meer Thoughts of Death by the Hands of Men; if he had nothing else to encounter with? When this dreadful Hour was come, and the Powers of Darknes were let loose upon him, he began to be sore amazed and very heavy, Mark xiv. 33. He told his Disciples, *My Soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto Death: He went forward a little, and fell on the Ground, and prayed, that if it were possible that Hour might pass from him.* He entreated his Father with Prayers and Supplications, with strong Cries and Tears, Heb. v. 7. Such a Terror was upon his Spirits, that three times he repeated the same Petition, that he might be excused if possible from drinking that Cup of Sorrow. The Agonies of his Soul pressed great drops of Blood through the Pores of his Body, and bathed him in a crimson Sweat. These Cries and Tears, these Agonies and these Sweats of Blood preach'd the Doctrine of Atonement with dreadful Power, and uncontested Evidence. And as upon the Cross, so in the Garden, 'tis probable, his Father forsook him, or hid his Face from him, so that he had need of an Angel to be sent down from Heaven on purpose to comfort or strengthen him, Luke xxii. 43. 'Twas here that he learnt feelingly what was the Curse of the broken Law, what was that Indignation and Wrath, Tribulation and Anguish, that were due to the Sin of Man. Here the Seed of the Woman maintain'd a Combat with that great Serpent, the Devil, and had his Heel bruis'd; that is, his lower Nature fill'd with Anguish. And 'tis most probable, that his Nature being worn out

with this Load of Distress, was the true Reason why he expir'd on the Cross much sooner than was expected, so that *Pilate marvelled to hear that he was already dead.*

I think 'tis impossible for the *Socinians*, who represent the Death of Christ chiefly as a Martyrdom for the Truth of his Doctrine, and an Example of Patience in suffering, to support their Scheme against this Argument, or to give any tolerable Account of this Amazement which possess his Spirit before his Enemies came near him, and of these Agonies of Soul which our blessed Lord sustain'd. Surely such Sorrows and such Terrors demonstrate the Work of Propitiation, and the dreadful Labour of reconciling an offending God and sinful Man.

VII. This Doctrine of Satisfaction for Sin by the Death of Christ is declared, and confirmed, and explained at large by the Apostles in their Writings, when they were fully furnished for their Ministry, by the Gifts of the Holy Ghost. Read St. Paul's Letters to the Churches, and you find them abounding in such Expressions as these; *Christ died for our Sins. He gave himself for us to redeem us from all Iniquity. We have Redemption through his Blood. God was in Christ reconciling the World to himself, not imputing their Trespases to them. He was made Sin, and he was made a Curse for us. He is our Propitiation and Atonement. He appeared to put away Sin by the Sacrifice of himself. When we were Enemies we were reconcil'd to God by his Death. He made Peace by the Blood of his Cross. He was deliver'd for our Offences, and raised again for our Justification. By the Righteousness of one Man, the Free Gift came upon all Men to Justification of Life. By the Obedience of one shall many be made righteous.*

Now in the Writings of St. Paul on this Subject, we may observe three Things.

(1.) He

(1.) He speaks this Language, when in a plain doctrinal Way he is teaching the Gospel of *Christ*, therefore these Expressions of his are to be understood in the common Sense and Meaning of the Words. 'Twould be a very great Force and Torture put upon these Expressions, if we construe them only to mean, that God promised Forgiveness to penitent Sinners by *Jesus Christ*, as a Messenger of Grace, and that *Christ* died as a Martyr to bear Witness to this Truth. Read his Epistles to the *Romans*, the *Epheſians*, the *Colossians*, and the *Hebrews*, where he treats of these Subjects, and you will find that the Apostle in his Doctrine of Atonement, means much more than this; for he talks in a plain rational and argumentative Style and Method, to inform the Minds of Men, of the true Design of the Death of *Christ*, and give them the clear Knowledge of the Truth.

(2.) He not only represents the Death of *Christ* as our Atonement for Sin, but he declares this to be the great End of his appearing in the Flesh, *Heb. ii. 14. Because the Children were Partakers of Flesh and Blood, he himself also took Part of the same, that through his own Death he might destroy the Devil. Heb. x. 5. Sacrifices of Bulls and Goats were insufficient, but a Body hast thou prepared me. Heb. ix. 26. Once in the End of the World he appeared to put away Sin by the Sacrifice of himself.* This was the Design of his Incarnation.

(3.) He makes the *Cross of Christ* and *Christ crucify'd* to stand for the Gospel itself, and glories in it as such. *1 Cor. i. Christ crucify'd is the Wisdom of God, and the Power of God. 1 Cor. ii. I desired to know nothing among you but Christ, and him crucify'd. Gal. vi. God forbid that I should glory save in the Cross of Christ:* And many such Expressions he uses, as though the publick Sermons of *Christ*, the Example of *Christ*, and the Duties that he prescribed, were all as nothing without the atoning Virtue of his

Death, and his Sacrifice on the Cross; for all these would not save us without his dying. This is eminently *the Gospel*.

Nor is the Apostle *Paul* singular in declaring this Doctrine of Atonement, or different in his Sentiments from the other Apostles. You find *Peter* and *John* saying the same Things in their Epistles, *We were not redeemed with Silver and Gold, but with the precious Blood of Christ, as of a Lamb without Blemish. Who his own self bare our Sins in his own Body on the Tree. Christ hath once suffer'd for Sins, the Just for the Unjust, to bring us to God. The Blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all Sin. Jesus Christ the Righteous is the Propitiation for our Sins. Hereby perceive we the Love of God, that he laid down his Life for us. Unto him that loved us and washed us from our Sins in his own Blood be Glory and Dominion for ever.* These Apostles takes every Occasion to publish the same Gospel, and the same Promises and Hopes of Salvation, by the Death and Sacrifice of our Lord *Jesus Christ*.

VIII. To sum up many Arguments in one, *These were the Doctrines that were witnessed to the World by those amazing Gifts of the Holy Ghost, which attended the Gospel* \*. The Gifts of Tongues, the Wonders of Prophecy, the Powers of Healing and Destroying, communicated to Men in such a Manner as the World never saw, and astonish'd the Spectators, all confirm'd the Truth of this Atonement which the Apostles preached. These were the Discoveries that were made so gloriously successful for the Conversion of Nations. These Doctrines subdued Kingdoms to the Belief of them, and triumphed over the Souls of Men: These were the Truths that chang'd

\* It was generally agreed that these Gifts of the Holy Ghost were never set in such an illustrious Light, for the Defence of Christianity, as in a late Treatise, entitled, *Miscellanea Sacra*, 2d Edit. 1752, especially from page 141 to the End.



the corrupt Natures of Men in Virtue, Piety, and Goodness, that turned Sinners into Saints in Multitudes, and raised a Church for Christ in the World, in spite of all the Rage of Enemies, the Superstitions of the Priests, the Learning and Sophistry of the Philosophers, the wild Prejudices of the People, and the Tyranny of Princes.

The primitive Christian Writers who were converted to the Faith, teach us these same Doctrines of the Grace of God, through the Atonement of Christ, the Pardon of Sin through his Blood, which had so much Power over their own Soul. In the Faith of these Doctrines, and the Hope of eternal Life by them, they became the glorious Confessors and Martyrs of a *crucify'd Christ*, and *cast down* the Tempter and the *Accuser by the Blood of the Lamb*. This is the Doctrine that has been delivered down to us through all Ages of the Christian Church; and though the *Antichristian* Powers have mingled it with many of their Superstitions, yet *the Gates of Hell have never been able to prevail against it*, so as to root it out. This is the Religion which, two hundred Years ago, was reformed from *Popish* Corruptions, and while our blessed Reformers laboured to recover and convey it to us in its primitive Glory, many of them were called to witness and seal it with their own Blood.

An *Occasional Remark*. Since these were the Truths that the last, and brightest, and best Revelation of God communicated to Men; since this Propitiation of Christ was the Doctrine which the inspired Apostles taught, and in which all the foregoing Revelations centre, even from the Beginning of the World: 'Tis by this therefore, that all the former and the darker Discoveries are to be explained; all the Types and Shadows of Ceremonial Worship, and the obscure Language of Prophecy, must have their true Light cast upon them by this Doctrine. This is the Clue to guide us into the My-

steries and deep Things of God, which lay hid under Veils for so many Ages. The great Apostle St. Paul shews us how to penetrate and unfold all the antient Dispensations, by the Doctrine of the Son of God coming into the Flesh, by his dying as a Sacrifice for Sin, by his rising and ascending to Heaven, by his appearing there as a Priest to intercede for Sinners in the Virtue of his Sacrifice, and by his sitting there as a King, to reign over all Things for the Salvation of his People, whom he has purchased with his own Blood.

#### THE RECOLLECTION.

What a Variety of Supports has this blessed Doctrine of our Reconciliation to God by the atoning Death of *Christ*? What a Train of Arguments to confirm it, are drawn down from the very first Entrance of Sin into the World! Guilty Nature urges us on to enquire after such an Atonement, and the Bible reveals it to us in a long Succession of Types, Promises, and Prophecies, in Narratives and plain Instructions, in darker or brighter Discoveries from the Beginning of Mankind.

If I forsake the Gospel of *Christ*, and his Atonement for Sin, whither shall my *guilty Conscience* fly to find a better Relief? This is the Doctrine that supplies the *chiefest Wants* of a guilty Creature, and the *chief defects* of natural Light and Reason. Nature shews me no Way to recompense the Justice of God for my innumerable Sins. Nature shews me nothing which God will accept in the room of my own perfect Obedience, or in the room of my everlasting Punishment. If I leave thee, O *Jesus*, whither should I go? Thy Sufferings are the Spring of my Hope of Pardon, and my eternal Life depends on thy painful and shameful Death.

I see

I see and I obtain in this Gospel of Atonement *all that the Heathen World labour'd for in vain, by many wild Inventions, and painful Superstitions.* The Anger of the God of Heaven is pacify'd by the Sufferings of *Jesus* his Son. O my God, let my Soul never run back to Infidelity and Heathenism, and rove abroad among the foolish Inventions of Men, in quest of any other Methods of Atonement. The Blood of *Jesus* is all my Hope.

Here I see the gracious Promises of antient Times fulfill'd, even the *first Promise of Mercy* that was ever made to fallen Man. Here I behold the Accomplishment of the *Predictions of the holy Prophets* since the World began; 'twas the *Spirit of Christ* spake in them, concerning the *Sufferings of Christ, and the Glory that should follow*, 1 Pet. i. 11. Here I see the *Seed of the Woman breaking the Head of the Serpent, the Son of God manifested*, and by his own Death destroying the *Works of the Devil*, 1 John iii. 8. Here I behold the *Messiah cut off, but not for himself.* I behold him here on his Cross finishing *Iniquity, Transgressions, and Sin; and bringing in an everlasting Righteousness.* I see *his Soul made an Offering for the Sins of Men*: And the Prophets *Isaiah* and *Daniel* conspiring with the blessed Apostles to point to *Jesus* as an all-sufficient Saviour.

I see the *Types and Shadows of the Jewish Religion* so happily answered in this Doctrine of the Priesthood and Sacrifice of *Christ*, that I am well assured that this is the *Substance*, for it bears the Shape and Lineaments of the *Shadow*. This is the *great Original*; for it carries the exact Resemblance of the *Types and Pictures* that went before. The antient Religion of Emblems and Figures was confirmed by the amazing Wonders of *Moses*; but the Religion of *Christ*, which contains in it the Substance and true Glory of all former Dispensations, is not only attested by the Miracles of the *Son of God*; but he himself also appears in the midst of it, in so divine

a Correspondence with the typical Ordinances of *Moses*, as gives a double and most undoubted Confirmation to his own blessed Gospel, and his own Atonement for Sin. Every thing that established the Religion of the *Jews*, serves to establish me in the Religion of Christ. Their Lavers and Washings, their Altars and Sacrifices were divine; but they were divine only for a Season. These antient Veils which cover'd the Gospel were of God's own Contrivance; and when they were exhibited to the People, especially in the Days of *Moses* and *Solomon*, they made a bright and sacred Appearance; but now the Gospel stands forth unveil'd, and in perfect Light, God himself hath folded up these Veils as an old Garment, and laid them aside. The Substance is come, and the Shadows disappear. Blessed be the Lord that I was brought forth since the Sun of Righteousness is risen upon the Earth, and the Morning Clouds are vanished away.

I hear *Jesus* my great Prophet preaching this Doctrine of Propitiation for our Sins by his Death, in his own Ministry; though he was content to do it in a more obscure and imperfect manner: And I now see the Reason why he taught this Truth chiefly in Parables, because 'twas not proper in that Age to be published to the Multitude in plain Language, 'till he had actually died and rose again.

I behold his terrible Agonies in the Garden, before he came near the Cross. I see the blessed Son of God labouring under the Burden of our Guilt, wrestling, and sweating Blood, under the unknown Impressions of that Tribulation and Wrath, that Indignation and Anguish, which was due to my Sins. What else could make so glorious and divine a Person discover such dreadful Distress of Soul? Again, he cries out on the Cross with Anguish of Spirit, he bleeds, he groans, he dies. I acknowledge the Truth of the Doctrine of his Atonement. I read it in all his Agonies. These are such Sufferings, and such



such Sorrows as are beyond all that Men could inflict, or that a meer Man could bear, beyond all the common Terrors of Death and the Grave. My Saviour sustain'd a heavier Burden, and was engaged in harder Work; a Labour more dreadful, and more glorious. He was then making Atonement to divine Justice for my Sins. And blessed be his Name for ever and ever.

I read the same Doctrine of Atonement for Sin, by the Death of *Christ*, in the *Writings of his holy Apostles*. This was the Gospel which they preach'd to the *Jews*, and to the rest of the *Nations*. This they delivered down in the sacred Records of the New Testament, whence we derive our Religion and our Hope. The Language in which they express our Reconciliation to God, by the Death of Christ, carries with it such Evidence, and such Strength, that if I believe these Books to be divine, I cannot but receive this Doctrine as the Truth of God; and I would learn of *St. Paul* to glory in the Cross of Christ, and to live by the Faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

When I read of the *astonishing Gifts of the blessed Spirit, communicated to the first Preachers and Professors of the Gospel*, when I survey these Gifts in all their extensive Glory, and in all their Force of Argument, I look upon all of them as an Heap of united Wonders, conspiring to support this Doctrine of the *Propitiation of Christ*, which was every where taught by these inspired Favourites of Heaven. Every *strange Tongue* which they spoke, teaches me this blessed Truth. Every *Disease of Body* which they healed, assures me, that the *Stripes* which Christ sustained, were for the *healing of our Souls*. Every *unclean Spirit* which they cast out, establishes my Belief, that by the atoning Death of Christ, we are delivered from the *Power of the Devil*. Every *surprising Wonder* which they wrought, gives me a firmer Persuasion of this wondrous Doctrine, that the Son of God died to give us Life.

Bles-

Blessed Saviour, let the same Spirit, by whose Influence they healed the Sick, they cast out Devils, and wrought all these Wonders, write this holy Religion, and this Doctrine of thy Atonement for Sins deep in my Heart. O let me make it my daily Food, the Support and the Life of my Soul. Teach me to apply it to all the holy Purposes for which so glorious a Doctrine was revealed to the World. In the Faith of this Atonement, by the Blood of Jesus, let me join in the Songs of Angels, and pronounce with Joy, *Glory to God in the Highest, Peace on Earth, and Good-will to Men*: Glory to God my Father and my Saviour: Pardon, Life and Salvation to dying Sinners. *Amen.*





# SERMON XXXVI.

The Use of the foregoing Sermon, with  
intermingled Reflections.

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ROM. iii. 25.

*Whom God hath set forth to be a Propitiation.*

**T**HIS glorious Doctrine of the *Propitiation of Christ*, has been explained and proved at large in the former Discourses. It remains that we shew the proper *Uses* of it. If we would set our Thoughts at work to draw *Inferences*, we might derive thence many *Truths*, as well as *Duties*. But as my chief Design is to promote practical Godliness, I shall content myself with mentioning two *doctrinal Inferences*, and all the rest shall more immediately direct our *Practice*.

1st. *Doctrinal Inference. How vain are all the Labours and Pretences of Mankind, sinful, guilty Mankind, to seek or hope for any better Religion than that which is contained in the Gospel of Christ! 'Tis here alone, that we can find the solid and rational Principles of Reconciliation to an offended God. This Doctrine of Atonement for Sin, by the Sufferings of Christ, is a substantial Ground for our Establishment in Christianity, and should be an effectual Persuasive, to continue in the Profession of the Gospel, Heb. iv. 14. Having such an High Priest as Jesus the Son of God, who*  
after

after he had died for our Sins, rose again, and enter'd into Heaven, let us hold fast our Profession. All the Religions that God ever appointed for fallen Man, meet and centre here. If you have any regard to Reason and Argument, if you would follow the Dictates of Revelation, or if you would seek the Peace and Happiness of your Souls, never, never forsake the Religion of Jesus.

*Reflection.* My Soul, hast thou heard this Doctrine of the Propitiation of Christ, and the Arguments that support it in the last Discourse? Dost thou receive, dost thou believe this great Article of Faith? Hold it fast then, and live upon it continually. Never hope to find a surer Spring of Pardon, nor a sweeter Relief for a guilty Conscience. Maintain this Hope, and hold fast thy Bible, where this Blessing is discovered to Men. Keep upon thy Spirit a due Sense and Relish of this Atonement for Sin: It will be a blessed Guard against Infidelity, and assist thee to stand in an Hour of Temptation, against the Cavils of Men, who have renounced the Gospel of God.

But remember, O my Soul, that if thou sin wilfully against this Gospel, i. e. if thou abandon this Grace, and reject it utterly with Contempt and Opposition, after thou hast received the Knowledge of the Truth, there remaineth no more Sacrifice for Sin, but a certain fearful looking for of Judgment and fiery Indignation which shall devour the Adversaries, Heb. x. 26, 27. This Scripture seems to stand like a divine Engine, charged with Vengeance and eternal Death, and pointed not only against the primitive Apostates, but against some of the profane Infidels and Scoffers of our Age, who have renounced, reproached, and ridiculed the Gospel which they once profest. Remember also, that it carries in it a very dangerous and threatening Aspect, upon those who continue to profess the Religion of the Bible, but cancel out of it the Doctrine of the Atonement of Christ; for there remains no other Sacrifice.



*Sacrifice.* Have a Care, therefore, O my Soul, and stand at a Distance from their Company, who deny the Propitiatory Virtue of the Blood of *Christ*! Let them find a better Ground to build their Hopes of Pardon upon: But do thou lay thy Foundation on this Rock, and the Powers of Hell shall not prevail against it.

2d Doctrinal Inference. *How strange and unreasonable is the Doctrine of the Popish Church, who, while they profess to believe the Religion of Christ, yet introduce many other Methods of Atonement for Sin, beside the Sufferings of the Son of God, and the Atonement which Jesus has made.*

Every Time they celebrate the Lord's Supper, and the Priest communicates the consecrated Bread to his deluded Followers, they suppose there is a fresh Propitiation made for Sin: Therefore they call it the *Sacrifice of the Mass*, and imagine, that their unscriptural Representation of this holy Ordinance, is a real Propitiation, not only for the Sins of the Living, but for those that are dead also. Whereas St. Paul assures us, *Heb. ix. 28. Christ was once offer'd to bear the Sins of many. Heb. x. 14. By one offering he hath for ever perfected them that are sanctified.* I confess, this Practice of theirs in the *Mass*, looks something like a Pretence of Honour, to the Name and Death of *Christ*; because, they declare, the *Mass* is but, as it were, a Repetition of the very Sacrifice of *Christ* himself: Tho' that is expressly contrary to the Language of Scripture; for *this Man Jesus, after he had offer'd one Sacrifice for Sins, for ever sat down at the Right Hand of God*; because his single Sacrifice was All-sufficient, and needs no Repetition.

But, beside this, they have many other Methods of Atonement which *Men* perform, and which they add to the Atonement of *Christ*. What are all their impos'd Penances, their Pilgrimages on bare Feet, the Scourgings of their own Bodies, the Garments of Hair worn upon their Flesh, and their Multitudes of repeat-

repeated *Latin Prayers*? What are they all but toilsome and painful Labours, *invented by Men*, to make Atonement for the Sins of the Soul?

*Reflection.* Blessed be the Name of our God, who has deliver'd our Nation from this Bondage of Iniquity, from these foolish Yokes and Burdens of Superstition; these profane Dishonours done to the Sacrifice and Atonement of *Jesus* our Saviour. We are ready to look on *Popery* now as lying a-far off, a-cross the Seas, as an evil Thing at a great Distance, and are not so much impress'd with a grateful Sense of our Preservation from it. We are too soon forgetful of our narrow Escape from this Mischief, by the late Revolution, and the Protestant Succession; by the Arm of God, and by the two best of Kings, *William* our Deliverer, and *George* our Defender. Had it not been for these Providences of Heaven, and these Princes on Earth, our Land might have been fill'd with these Superstitions, and they might have been impos'd on us, under the Penalties of Imprisonment and Poverty, Torment and Death. And how could we stand in the fiery Trial? Awake, O my Heart, and let my Tongue awake into Songs of Praise and Salvation, that I am not tempted or compelled to disgrace the Blood of my Saviour, by having other Atonements for Sin impos'd on my Conscience. And in the midst of thy Praises to God, O my Soul, drop a Tear of Pity on thy Brethren, who dwell in the midst of these Temptations, and in the Language of Christian Sympathy, lift up a Groan to Heaven for them, and say, *How long, O Lord, how long?*

But let my Thoughts return home from the *Popish* Countries and their Superstitions. 'Tis not enough for me to renounce the *Inventions of Men*, as any Part of my Righteousness, to procure my Pardon and Acceptance in the Sight of God; but even the *Duties* which God himself has required; the *Duties of Faith and Love*, of *Repentance* and *new Obedience*,  
must

must never stand in the room of the Atonement of *Christ*. They are all poor defective Works, and want to be sprinkled with the Blood of his Sacrifice! They were never designed to join with the Obedience and Death of *Christ*, in procuring the Favour of an offended God. Have a care, therefore, O my Soul, of resting in the best of thy holy Services, or of making them a matter of Merit, to introduce thee before his Presence. When thou art rais'd nearest to Heaven, in the Practice of Christian Graces and Duties, fall down before the Throne, confess thy Unworthiness, and say, *If thou, O Lord, shouldst mark Iniquities, who can stand? But there is Forgiveness with thee, and plentiful Redemption by the Blood of Jesus.* There lies all my Hope.

Thus I have finish'd the two *Inferences for Instruction*, I proceed now to those which more immediately relate to our *Practice*.

This blessed Doctrine of the *Atonement of Christ*, runs like a golden Thread thro' the whole of our Religion: It unites the several Parts of it in a sweet Harmony, and casts a Lustre over them all. Let us then particularly survey some of the various *practical Uses* to which it may be apply'd.

I. 'Tis a solid Foundation, on which the greatest of Sinners may hope for Acceptance with God, when they return to him: 'Tis a sufficient Ground for their firm Trust in *Christ* as a Saviour, and a reviving Cordial against sinking in Despair.

Let the Crimes of a Creature be never so great and heinous, yet the Atonement of the Son of God is equal to them all. Let the Defilements and Stains of the Soul be never so deep and crimson, the Blood of *Christ* has a strange and divine Virtue to wash them away, and to make the Sinner *white as Snow*, even in the Sight of an holy God. *Rev. vii. 14. They washed their Garments, and made them white in the Blood of the Lamb.* This is a faithful Saying, (as St. Paul tells

tells Timothy) and worthy of all Acceptation, Christ Jesus came into the World to save Sinners, of whom I am chief. And our Saviour assures us, *All manner of Sin and Blasphemy shall be forgiven to Men*, Mat. xii. 14. because he knew that he could make Compensation to divine Justice for all this Guilt. Therefore all Sorts of Blasphemers and Criminals shall be forgiven, but those who blaspheme the Holy Spirit in his highest Attestations to this Gospel, and utterly refuse this Atonement of Christ. 1 John i. 10. *The Blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all Sin*; 'tis a divine Sacrifice, an All-sufficient Propitiation, extensive as our Iniquities.

Jesus is an able, and an almighty Saviour, so that the vilest of Sinners need not despair, if they are but willing to return to God, and come unto him, that they may be saved in his own Way. The deepest wounds that were ever made in the Conscience by Sins, against Light, and against Love, Sins of Long Continuance, Sins of old Obstinacy and repeated Backslidings, Sins of the blackest Aggravations, may all be healed by applying the *Blood of Christ*. Awake, arise, O Sinner, fly to the Hope that is set before thee! In vain will you try a thousand Remedies, that is the only Relief. A Soul stung with the Guilt of Sin, as with a fiery Serpent, must look up to Jesus hanging on the Cross, there alone can he find Healing and Life.

*Reflection.* And what is my State? And what is my present Case? *Am I a Sinner under the first Awakenings of Conscience?* Is my Spirit filled with dreadful Apprehensions of an offended God, and of a Law that pronounceth Curses and Death? Am I enquiring, *What shall I do to flee from the Wrath to come?* Does the Load of all my past Offences lie heavy upon me? Are my Sins gone over my Head as an heavy Burden, too heavy for me to bear? Does Satan, the Tempter and the Accuser, terrify and hurry me with despairing Thoughts? Does he tell me that my Crimes are too big to be forgiven? But Satan is a Liar, from the Beginning.

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The Gospel of *Christ* is divinely true. I come to *Jesus* as a great High Priest in the Blood of his Atonement: *I come weary and heavy laden*, under a Sense of the Guilt of past Sins, and the remaining Power of them in my Soul. O *Jesus*, fulfil thy Promise, and give *Rest* to my labouring and wounded Spirit! Speak a Word of Peace and Pardon to a sinking Creature, and raise and receive him to Hope and Salvation. I am worthy to perish for ever, but thy Death is worthy to procure Life for me. Here I rest my heavy-laden Soul, and with humble Hope I wait for thy Mercy.

Or, *Am I a Professor of Religion that have fallen under great Decays and wretched Backslidings?* Are old Terrors and Agonies returned upon my Conscience with redoubled Smart and Anguish? Do I see my Guilt? My shameful Wanderings, my loathsome Iniquities? Do I seem, as it were, to be cast out from God? And does he seem to shut the Door of Heaven against my Prayers? yet I will not despair: I will come in the Name of *Jesus* the great Atonement. Wash my guilty Soul, O blessed Redeemer, with thy Blood, and *I will look again toward the holy Temple*, I will lift up an humble Eye toward an offended God. Thy Sacrifice is ever fresh in the Power and Virtue of it. The *Lamb as it had been slain*, appears in Heaven with the Marks of his Sacrifice. I return with a broken Heart to my heavenly Father: I return trembling and hoping in the Merit of that everlasting Atonement, and wait for restoring Grace.

Or, *Am I endeavouring to walk closely with my God, in all the Duties of Holiness, but daily Infirmities break out, daily Follies and Guilt attend me?* I make sore Complaints indeed, because of the perpetual Workings of indwelling Sin; yet I will not despair. I love the Word of God, and I read it to keep me from sinning: But St. *John* assures me, *if any Man sin through the Weakness of Nature, and the Prevalence of daily Temptations, we have an Advocate with*

*the Father, even Jesus the Righteous, 1 John ii. 1, 2.* And he is an effectual Advocate, because *he is a Propitiation for our Sins*; and he pleads in the Virtue of his own Blood. O may I ever maintain a constant Exercise of Faith on the Son of God, as my great High Priest! May I keep up a lively and delightful Sense of the All-sufficiency of his Atonement upon my Spirit, that this which is the Glory of my Religion, may also be the daily Life of my Soul.

II. This Doctrine of Atonement for Sin, should be used as a powerful Motive to excite Repentance in every Heart where Sin hath dwelt. Repentance and Forgiveness are joined together in the Commission of our exalted Saviour, Acts v. 31. Grace is a sweet and constraining Motive to Duty. There is a abundant Encouragement for Sinners to repent and mourn before God for their past Transgressions, because the Blood of Jesus has provided Pardon for them, 1 John i. 9: *If we confess our Sins, God is faithful to his own Word, and just and true to his Son Jesus, to forgive such Offenders, and his Blood will cleanse us from our Sins.* The fallen Angels are not called and encourag'd by divine Mercy, to repent of their heinous Rebellions; for there is no Saviour, there is no atoning Sacrifice provided for them.

*Reflection.* And is there such an Atonement made? And are there such Pardons provided for such guilty Wretches as I have been? Is God reconciling himself to Men, and reconciling Men to himself, by the Blood of Jesus? Then let my Soul mourn for all her Follies, all her past Iniquities. Let me be cover'd with Shame, and lie in the Dust at the Foot of God. O let him speak Peace and Forgiveness to me, through the Blood of Christ. *I remember my Guilt and am confounded, and open my Mouth no more to vindicate myself: I am overwhelmed with this amazing Instance of divine Love: God has sent his Son to die for me, and is pacified to-*  
ward

ward me, for all that I have done against him. O wretched Creature that I am, that ever I should rebel against a God of such Compassion! Against a God, who all this while had such kind Designs towards me, and was making his own Way to Reconciliation and Peace, through the Blood of his own Son! I find now by sweet Experience, what I have been often told by other Christians, that the most kindly Workings of true Repentance, arise from the Sense of a forgiving God, and a dying Saviour.

III. Let us use this Atonement of Christ, *as our constant Way of Access to God in all our Prayers.* This is the only safe Method of Address to the Mercy-Seal: 'Tis ordained for this very Purpose, to help a Sinner near to God, *Heb. x. 19. Having therefore, Brethren, boldness to come into the Holiest by the Blood of Jesus, and having an High Priest over the House of God, let us draw near with a true Heart.* He is ascended to Heaven before us, he is enter'd within the Veil in Virtue of his Sacrifice; he has bespoke Acceptance for our Persons before the Throne, and a favourable Audience for all our Prayers. Whatsoever we ask of the Father, we must *ask it in his Name*, and especially in the Name and Vertue of his great Atonement: All the Blessings that God has to bestow, are purchased by his Sufferings.

*Reflection.* Remember, O my Soul, and be humble; Remember thou canst not be a welcome Guest even at the Throne of Grace, unless thou art sprinkled with the Blood of Jesus. The God whom thou hast offended, is a great God, and a terrible, a God of Holiness, like a devouring Fire; a God of awful Majesty and severe Justice, *who will by no means clear the Guilty*, without some Recompence for his broken Law. Dare not approach him therefore, but under the Protection of the Blood of his Son; Christ is set forth as our Propitiation through Faith in his Blood. If thou bring the Atonement of Christ

in the Hand of thy Faith, thou shalt find sweet and easy Access : And when thou art fill'd with inward Sorrows, thou may'st pour them out all, and spread thy Complaints and thy Burdens before the Eyes of thy God, with inward Consolation and Hope.

Lord, I have sinned, but thy Son has suffered : I come to the Throne of Grace in his Name. My Offences cry for Vengeance, but the *Blood of Jesus speaks better Things*, and cries louder for Peace and Pardon. Let the Voice of that Blood which has made full Satisfaction for the vilest Sins, prevail over all my Unworthiness. Let the Lamb which is in the midst of the Throne be honoured this Day, by introducing a guilty Creature with all his Complaints and Sorrows into thy awful Presence, and thy divine Favour. Let me obtain Grace in the Hour of my Distress and Necessity : And, O that I may find such Success, and such ease of Soul, in drawing near to God by the Blood of *Christ*, that on all Occasions I may run to this Refuge, and maintain humble and constant Communion with God my Father *in this new and living Way* of Access. May this earthly and foolish Spirit of mine, never be such a Stranger as it has been at the Mercy-Seat, since the Door of Reproach is always open, since I have so glorious an Introducer.

IV. We should use this Atonement of Christ *as a divine Guard against Temptation and Sin*, 1 Pet. i. 15, 18, 19. *As he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of Conversation, for ye are redeemed with the precious Blood of Christ, as of a Lamb without Blemish and without Spot.*

*Reflection.* And has this Soul of mine, which was in slavery to Sin and the Power of *Satan*, been redeemed by the Death of the Son of God? And shall I run back to my old Slavery, and give myself up again to the Reign and Tyranny of Sin?

Has



Has this guilty and polluted Soul been wash'd in so precious a Laver as the Blood of the Son of God? And shall I defile myself again? Shall I *return with the Dog to his Vomit, or with the Swine that was wash'd, to her wallowing in the Mire?* It was Sin that cost my Redeemer so dear, that cost him Agonies and Death: And shall I indulge such an Enemy in my Heart, and obey it in my Practice? *God forbid!* How shall I that am dead to Sin, by my Interest in a dying Saviour, live any longer therein? 'Tis a Scandal and Reproach to this blessed Doctrine of Atonement, if I should ever dare give a Loose to my Iniquities, while I profess *Faith in the Blood of Christ*. Grant, O Jesus, that I may never turn this adorable Grace of thine into Wantonness.

V. The Atonement of Christ is an *Argument of prevailing Force to be used in Prayer, when we plead for the Aids of the blessed Spirit*; when we ask for his sacred Influences to enlighten, to sanctify, or to comfort our Souls. The Spirit flows down to us in the Blood of Christ.

*Reflection.* Holy Father, thou hast not withheld thy Son Jesus, but hast given him to die for me, and wilt thou not give me thy Spirit to live in me, and to raise me to a divine Life? Even when I was dead in *Trespases and Sins*, my blessed Saviour poured out his own Soul to Death, that I might be recovered to thy Favour; and shall I not have thine Image imprest upon me by the Spirit, that I may appear before thee in the Beauty of Holiness? Shall I be sprinkled with the Blood of Christ, and have my Errors forgiven, and shall I not have divine Light bestowed upon me, that I may not wander afresh in the Ways of Error and Darknes? Is my Guilt cancelled, and are my Iniquities removed by the great Atonement of the Son of God, and wilt thou not bestow thy sanctifying Spirit upon me, to guard me from renewed Guilt and fresh Iniquities?

ties? Lord, have I not *fled to lay hold on the Hope set before me*? Hast thou not forgiven all my Sins? And shall not the *Spirit*, the *Comforter*, speak Peace to my Soul, and fill me with Hope and Joy in believing? Wilt thou deny thy *Spirit* to any Creature, for whom *thy Son* has poured out his invaluable Life and Blood?

[*If this Sermon be too long, here is a proper Pause.*]

How great and desirable are the Advantages that we have found already to be deriv'd from this Gospel of Atonement? May our Souls possess and improve them all! But there are still more Treasures of divine Grace to be dug out of this golden Mine: 'Tis an inexhausted Fountain of Duties and Blessings. I proceed therefore to point out more of them to the Eye of Faith.

VI. We should use this Doctrine of Propitiation for Sin by the Death of Christ, as an *everlasting Spring of holy Love to God the Father, and to his Son Jesus Christ*. Great and unspeakable was the Love of God the Father: 1 *John* iv. 9, 10. *Herein is Love; not that we loved him, but he hath loved us, and sent his Son to be the Propitiation for our Sins*. Great and unspeakable is the Love of *Jesus* the Saviour; it has *Heights and Depths, and Lengths and Breadths in it which pass our Knowledge*, *Eph.* iii. 18. For, *when we were Enemies, he died to reconcile us to God*, *Rom.* v. 10. The great and blessed God had no richer Gift than his Son, and he bestowed his Son upon us. *Christ Jesus* himself made his *Flesh and Soul* an Offering for our Sins. 'Twas a Spring of divine Love that arose from the Bosom of God, and runs through all this sacred Transaction in many blessed Streams: It runs through all the Length of Time into a long Eternity. How should this melt and soften our Hearts, into returns of Love to the great God, and

to his Son *Jesus Christ*. *We love him*, (saith the beloved Apostle) *because he first loved us*, 1 John iv. 19.

*Reflection.* And what shall I do to raise my Love to God my Father, and my blessed Redeemer? When I was a Stranger and an Enemy, God reconciled me to himself, by sending his Son to die for me. How hard is this wretched Heart of mine, that it feels no more powerful Impressions from this amazing Love and Compassion of God to a rebel Creature! What Sorrows, what Indignities, what bitter Scoffs, what Loads of Reproach, what inward and unknown Agonies of Soul, what a shameful, and painful, and cursed Death, did the blessed Son of God endure for my sake? And can I forbear to love him? Alas! how cold are my Affections! How feeble and languid is my Zeal! What poor sorry Returns do I make for these infinite Condescensions of divine Love! Warm my Heart, O *Jesus*, with thy Love, and inflame all my Affections. O may all the Powers of my Soul exert their utmost Diligence in the Service of the Son of God, that has redeemed me! His *Love was stronger than Death*; and shall it not constrain me to love him? Did he lay down his Life for my Sake, and shall I not lay out and employ my Life with all my Talents and Capacities to his Honour? Blessed *Jesus*, I grieve, I mourn, I am confounded that I feel no more of the constraining Influences of thy dying Love, to make all my Duty and Obedience easy and delightful.

VII. This Doctrine carries in it a strong *Persuasive* to that Love and Pity which we should shew on all Occasions to our Fellow-Creatures. When the Apostle John had magnified the Love of God, in that he sent his Son to be a Propitiation for our Sins: He makes this Inference, *Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another*, 1 John iv. 11. And in

the foregoing Chapter, he raises this Inference of Love to a sublime Degree: *Because God hath laid down his Life for us, we ought to lay down our Lives for the Brethren.* But how can any Person make a Pretence to Christianity, who *hath the Good of this World, and seeth his Brother have need, and shutteth up his Bowels of Compassion from him?* Now can such an hardened and cruel Heart pretend that the Love of God dwell's there? 1 John iii. 16.

This blessed Truth of the Forgiveness of Sin thro' the Propitiation of Christ, demands of us the Duties of *Forbearance and Forgiveness, of Kindness and Tendernefs to Men. Be ye kind one to another, and tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you,* Eph. iv. 32. Shall Christians bite and devour each other, shall they rage against each other with bitter Reproaches, shall they quarrel, and grieve, and wound each other, who were once Fellow-Slaves in the Chains of Guilt and Death, and were redeemed together by the voluntary Death of the Son of God? Shall they who have known and tasted such divine Compassion, imitate the Rage, and Malice, and Envy of Hell, rather than the heavenly Example of the blessed *Jesus*?

*Reflection.* And hast thou never felt the Influence of this divine Truth, O my Soul, this blessed Doctrine of atoning Love? Dost thou swell with Anger? Dost thou resent every supposed Injury? Dost thou indulge a Spirit of Revenge? And do thy Thoughts contrive Mischief to Men, while the Thoughts of the Son of God are all Tendernefs and Compassion toward thee? Had he resented all thy Iniquities, had he meditated Vengeance for all thy Crimes, he had never laid down his Life to rescue thee from Hell, and thy State and thy Case had been miserable without Hope.

Hast thou no Pity for the Poor, when their Necessities and Groans cry aloud for thy Relief? The Son of God did not deal thus with thee: He expended



pended the Riches of his Love upon thee, even his unsearchable Riches of Grace: And when no other Price was sufficient to redeem thee from Death, he gave up himself for thee, and made *his own Soul an Offering for thy Sins.* Remember therefore, when Provocations to Anger are set before thee, and thou feelest the inward rising Passion, remember the Death and Love of the Son of God, remember the Price of thy Forgiveness.

VIII. *Patience under heavy Afflictions*, is another divine Lesson that we should learn from this Doctrine of the atoning Death of Christ; and not *Patience* only, but *holy Joy in the midst of earthly Sorrows* may be derived from the same Spring. *Rom. v. 1, &c. Being justified by Faith we have Peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, we rejoice in Hope of the Glory of God; and not only so, but we glory in Tribulations, because God has commended his Love towards us at this rate, in that while we were yet Sinners Christ died for us.*

*Reflection.* Why then should my Spirit be overwhelmed under the Troubles of this Life? Surely the Mercies which I enjoy are infinitely greater than all my Sorrows. God has redeemed my Soul from Hell by the Blood of his Son. Lord, I would suppress all my repining Thoughts; I am humble, I am thankful; and though thou visitest me with Chastisements, to reduce me from my Follies, thou hast not laid on me the Burden of my Sins, nor call'd me to the hard and dreadful Work of answering the severe Demands of thy broken Law. This Burden thy own Son has borne; this Work he has performed. *The Cup of common Sorrows which my heavenly Father puts into my Hand, shall I not drink it!* It is not a Cup of such Anguish and Terror as the Son of God drunk up for my sake. Why should a Creature saved from Hell, be impatient and uneasy at any

any of the little Sufferings which he sustains here on Earth?

This is not only a powerful Argument to compose my Soul to *Resignation* under Troubles, but even to raise me to *holy Joy*. Surely he that has loved me, and has given his own Son up to Death for me, *does not afflict me willingly, nor grieve my Spirit* beyond what he sees necessary. He transacts all his Affairs with me according to that Covenant of Love whereby he ordained his Son to die for me; and he will bestow upon me every good Thing in its proper Season: *He that spared not his own Son, but gave him up to die for us, shall he not with him freely give us all Things!*

Bless the Name of my God, O my Soul, let my Heart be fill'd with Thankfulness, and my Lips with Praise: He has distinguished thee, my Soul, by peculiar Blessings. He has made no such Preparation of an Atonement for Angels, those heavenly Creatures, when they sinned against him, but *they are cast down into Chains of Darkness*; and why am not I cast into Chains of Darkness too? He has not revealed this Grace to several large *Heathen Nations*: They know nothing of a Redeemer: But he has revealed his Son to me, in the Glory and Grace of his Atonement: He has raised me to the Hope of eternal Life, by the Death and the Resurrection of *Jesus* his Son. Let all my Murmurings and Impatience be silent for ever. The worst of *my present Sufferings* are not worthy to be compared with the Glory that shall be revealed, the Glory purchased by the Sufferings of *Christ*.

IX. The Doctrine of the Atonement of *Christ* gives us a blessed Invitation to the Lord's Supper, where *Christ crucify'd* is set forth before us in the Memorials of his Propitiation.

The Propitiation of Christ is of so constant and universal Use in the whole of our Religion, that our blessed Lord would not suffer us to live without some sensible Tokens and Signs of it, and these are to be frequently repeated to the End of the World; and therefore he has given a most exprefs and positive Command, *Luke xxii. 19. This do in Remembrance of me.* And the Apostle *Paul, 1 Cor. xi. 26.* where he teaches the *Corinthians* this Ordinance, assures them, *as often as ye eat this Bread, and drink this Cup, ye do shew the Lord's Death till he come.* Our blessed Lord has not given us such a peculiar Memorial of any of his other Actions or Offices as he has of his Priesthood and Sacrifice.

*Reflection.* And shall I not do Honour to the Memory of my dying Saviour? Shall I refuse to remember my great High Priest, and his Propitiation for Sin, in the Way and Manner in which he has enjoin'd me? Do I not trust in the Death of *Christ* for my Salvation, and shall I not glory in his Cross, and profess it before the World? Do I not stand in daily need of this Bread of Life which was broken for my sake, and shall I reject the Memorials of his broken Body, when his Flesh and Spirit were made an Offering for my Guilt? Do I not hope for Forgiveness through his Blood, and shall I not drink this Cup of Reconciliation which he has mingled? I have learnt by the Gospel, the Excellency and Virtue of the Propitiation of *Christ*, to cancel my Iniquities, and shall I not receive this Propitiation in all the Methods of his own Appointment? Shall I dare to say, 'tis enough for me to read it in the Bible, and to hear it in the Ministry of the Word, and to meditate on it in private, when my Lord has given me an exprefs Command to receive it also in those Emblems and sensible Figures of Bread and Wine, and has sanctify'd them for this very Purpose? Is this a kind Return to him that died for me?

Blessed Redeemer, forgive all my Omissions, my Delays, my careless or slothful Neglects of this holy Ordinance of thine, and all my sinful Indifferency about it. O scatter all my Doubts, banish all my Excuses, and bring me to thy holy Table as a penitent and humble Disciple, as a worthy and joyful Receiver; there let me join with my Fellow-Christians and remember thy dying Love.

X. We may use this Doctrine as our most *effectual Defence against the Terrors of dying; and as our joyful Hope of our blessed Resurrection.*

The Atonement of *Christ* is a divine Support in the Agonies of Death. At such a Season a Thousand past Iniquities will some times croud in upon the Memory, and fill the Soul with Horror, and perhaps *Satan* the Accuser makes a dreadful Assault upon the Conscience at the same time, and torments the Spirit with painful Agonies: But the most formidable Terrors, the sharpest Agonies find a Relief here, the very Sting of Death is taken away by the Death of *Christ*, 1 Cor. xv. 56. *The Sting of Death is Sin, and the Strength of Sin, to condemn us, is the Law of God; but thanks be to God through Christ Jesus, who hath answered the Demands of the condemning Law, and taken away the Sting of Death by his atoning Sacrifice.*

We may now venture into the Presence of a holy and righteous God, laying fresh hold of the Atonement in a dying Hour by a living Faith, and having our departing Spirits sprinkled with the Blood of *Christ*. 'Twas this very Blood in the Virtue of which *Jesus* himself was raised from the Dead, *Heb. xiii. 20. The God of Peace brought again from the Dead our Lord Jesus, the great Shepherd of the Sheep, through the Blood of the everlasting Covenant.* 'Twas in the Virtue of this Blood that he ascended and appeared before God in Heaven: *Heb. ix. 12. Christ by his own Blood en-*  
ter'd



*ter'd into the holy Place, having obtain'd eternal Redemption for us.*

Did the cursed Guilt of our Sins bring the Son of God down from Heaven to Earth; did it smite him to Death, and lay him low in the Grave? But the Power of his compleat Atonement has broken the Bonds of Death and the Grave; this has brought him back to Life again, and has rais'd him from Earth to Heaven; and by the same Blood of his Cross he has opened an effectual Way for our rising from the Dead, and our final Admission into the Place of Blessedness. As *Aaron* the Jewish High-Priest might not dare to venture into the *Holy of Holies* without the Blood of Expiation, so *Christ* our great High-Priest, when he had once taken our Sins upon him, might not ascend to Heaven into the Presence of God, till, in the Language of Scripture, he could carry *his Blood with him*, till he could shew a full Atonement. Now that very same Blood and Sacrifice which gave *Christ* himself a joyful Admission into Heaven, who was the *great Shepherd* and the Representative of his People, will also give every one of his *Sheep* a safe and glorious Entrance into the Presence of God. This we may hope for with a cheerful Heart, when our departing Spirits are called away from this lower World. And for the further Joy of our Faith, we should remember also, that in the Virtue of the same Blood we shall be raised from the Grave: The Grave shall obey the Voice of him that died for us; for he has ransom'd us from the Power of it. Then the Soul and Body of every Disciple of *Christ* shall be introduced with divine Acceptance to dwell *where Jesus is*, and to behold his Glory.

*Reflection.* Why then art thou so terrify'd, O my Soul, at the Thoughts of dying? Why all these Shudderings of the Flesh, and these Agonies of Spirit at the Apprehensions of Death and the Grave? Are the Sins of thy Life great and numerous? Do they

they throng in upon thy Conscience, and fill thy Thoughts with Tumult and Terror? Remember the Time, the dark and dismal Hour, when *Jesus* thy Saviour bore all those very Sins in his own Body on the Tree: There the Demands of divine Justice were all answer'd, and Sin has now no Power to condemn the Saint; nor has Death Power to hurt him in his best Interests. *Who shall condemn? It is Christ that has died, yea, rather has risen again, as a compleat Conqueror over Death.* And is not *Christ* thy Head, thy Redeemer, and the Captain of thy Salvation.

Let me call to mind the solemn Seasons of Transaction between *Christ* and my Soul. Have I not resign'd myself to him as an all-sufficient Saviour, to deliver me both from the Guilt and the Power of every Sin? Have I not trusted in the Blood of his Atonement, and felt the quickening Power of his Spirit as the Fruit of his Blood? Has he not raised me to a new Life? What if the mortal *Body must die because it has Sin in it, yet my Spirit shall live because Christ is my Righteousness.* Fear not then, O my Soul, but go cheerfully through the Gates of Death when he calleth thee. *Jesus* has taken away the Terrors of that dark Passage. He has depriv'd Death of its Sting, and sanctified the Grave for a sweet sleeping Place. Awaken all the Powers of thy Faith, and triumph over the conquered Enemy. The Justice of God is become thy Friend, and Death can do no Mischief to the Friends of God, reconciled by the Blood of *Jesus*. Look forward and behold thy great Fore-runner ready to introduce thee into the Presence of *his Father, and thy Father, his God and thy God*, with exceeding Joy. Bid a joyful Farewel to Flesh and Sense, those busy Tempters; farewell to Time and this World, and all things that are not divine and holy. Turn thy Back on all visible Objects, close thine Eyes with a smiling Countenance, forget

forget Earth for ever, and enter into the heavenly Mansions.

XI. The View of Christ as our Propitiation, is not only a safe Defence against the Terrors of Death, but *'tis a divine Allurement toward the upper World.* There lives our dear Redeemer, our blessed and beloved Lord, who ransomed our Souls from Sin and Hell. There he reigns on the Throne as King of Glory, who once hung on the Cross as our Sacrifice of Atonement: *The Lamb of God in the midst of the Throne,* with the Signals of his Death upon him. The Sight of these Signals shall open all our Springs of Love: Joy, Love, and Gratitude shall fill the departed Spirit: As soon as we are *absent from the Body* we are *present with the Lord* who died for us.

*Reflection.* O happy Day and happy Hour indeed, that shall finish the long Absence of my Beloved, and place me within Sight of my adored Jesus! When shall I see that lovely, that illustrious Friend, who laid down his own Life to rescue mine, his own valuable Life to ransom a Worm, a Rebel that deserved to die? He suffered, he groaned, he died; but he rose again, the blessed Saviour arose, he lives, he reigns exalted over all the Creation. Faith beholds him risen, and reigning, but *'tis through a Glass,* *'tis at a Distance,* and *but darkly.* I wait, I hope for a more divine Pleasure; *'tis a Delight worth dying for, to behold him Face to Face, to see him as he is,* to converse with his wonderful Person, and to survey his Glories. Alas, my Soul is too patient of this long Distance and Separation. O for the Wings of Love, to bear my Spirit upward in holy Breathings! Methinks I would long to be near him, to be with him, to give him my highest Praises and Thanks for my Share in his dying Love. I would rise to join with the blessed Acclamations, the holy Songs of the Saints on high, while they behold their exalted Saviour. How sweet their Songs!  
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How loud their Acclamations ! This is the Man, the God-man who died for me ! This is the Son of God, who was buffeted, who was crowned with Thorns, who endured exquisite Anguish, and unknown Sorrows for me, who was scourged, and wounded, and crucified for me ! This is the glorious Person, the Lamb of God, who washed me from my Sins in his own Blood. Blessing, Honour, and Salvation to his holy Name for ever and ever. *Amen.*







# SERMON XXXVII.

The Christian's Treasure.

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I COR. iii. 21.

*All Things are yours.*

**T**IS a peculiar Delight of this Apostle to survey the Blessings we derive from *Christ*, and to run over the Glories of the Gospel in flowing Language. At the End of this Chapter he reckons up the Privileges of the Saints, and tells them, they have an Interest in all Things: "It does not become you, says he, to enter into Parties; and to glory in any single Man, no, not in *Paul*, *Apollos*, nor *Cephas*, for *all things are yours, whether Life or Death, whether this World or the other, whether Things present or Things to come, all are yours.*"

To improve this Proposition, and to bring it down to some practical Purposes, let us consider,

I. What we are to understand by this extensive Privilege of true Christians, contain'd in this Expression; *All Things are yours*, and what is the true Limitation of the Sense of it.

II. It shall be proved, that notwithstanding the limited Sense of these Words, yet the Saints have a richer Treasure in them, than the greatest Riches of a Sinner.

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III. We shall enquire how Christians come to possess such a Treasure. And,

IV. See what Use may be made of this Doctrine.

First, *What are we to understand by this Expression, All things are yours?*

To answer this Enquiry clearly, I am constrain'd to introduce these two *Negatives*,

1st, We are not to suppose here that *all Things are in the Possession of true Christians, and under their Power*. This Truth every Man is a Witness of, that the Saints have neither Heaven nor Earth in their present Possession. The Sun and Stars are not at their Command, nor the Riches of this World in their Chests, nor the Kingdoms of this World under their Government. No, by no Means, for they are most times poor and mean in this World, many of them destitute of the common Supports of Nature, and the Comforts of Life. *Christ himself, their Lord and Master, had not where to lay his Head: And the Apostles, who were the chief of Christians, suffered Hunger and Thirst, were naked and buffeted; they had sometimes neither Food nor Raiment, neither Rest nor Peace, nor any certain Dwelling-Place, 1 Cor. iv. 11.*

2dly, And as all Things are not in their Possession, so neither are we to understand that *all Things in a civil Sense are their Right and Property*. They have not a just Claim and Demand of the good Things which their Neighbours possess, nor ought they to take Possession of them, though they had Power to do it. It is a very wicked Principle which has no Countenance from Scripture, and has been abus'd to most unrighteous and bloody Purposes, that *Dominion is founded in Grace*, or that the *Saints have a present Civil Right to all the Earth, and the good Things of it*. From this sort of Doctrine, some Men of furious Zeal and Enthusiasm have been tempted to rise and seize on the Property of their Neighbours.

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And indeed, all the *Persecution* in the World upon the Account of Religion, is built on this Principle, that *the Saints alone have a Right to Peace and Liberty, to Honour and Money, and all the good Things of this Life; and that the Heretick and the Sinner have no Right to any thing.* And tho' Persecutors are very much asham'd to own this Doctrine in Words, yet they confirm it and comment upon it, in all their oppressive and bloody Practices.

But the Christian Religion knows no such Principles; it allows every Man's Property and Interest in the Goods of this World, whether he be a *Turk* or a *Jew*, a *Heathen* or a *Christian*, a *Saint* or a *Sinner*. 'Tis Providence has disposed of these outward Things in the civil Life, and Men become intitled to them, by the Laws and Agreements of civil Society: And thus a rich wicked Man may be righteously possessed of a fine House, and purple Raiment, may have a well-spread Table, and large Lands and Dominions, while a Saint may happen to lie at his Door destitute of Bread and Cloathing.

But in what Sense then can it be said, that *All Things are theirs?*

To give a just Answer to this Enquiry, we must take Notice, that the Apostle's first Design here, is to shew, that Believers need not be so fond of assuming to themselves a peculiar Interest in one Minister or another, for they may enjoy the Gifts of all; *All are for their sakes:* And from this single Hint he rises high into the Privileges of the Saints. Not Ministers only, as *Paul* and *Cephas*, are designed for their Benefit; but *all Things are theirs:* All Things in Heaven or Earth, in Time, or in Eternity, are appointed to do some Service to them.

This therefore I take to be the true Sense of my Text, viz. that *All Things in the Creation of God, all Things in all his vast Dominions, which a Christian can or shall at any Time have to do with, shall as certainly serve to promote his true Interest, and his final Happiness,*

as though he himself had sovereign Dominion over them, or present Possession of them : Always supposing that the Christian maintain his Character, and act in his Station becoming the Dignity of his holy and heavenly Calling.

The plain Meaning of the Words is, that *All Things shall work for the good of the Saints.* But the Apostle chuses to express this in a noble Manner here, and by such an exalted Figure of Speech as aggrandizes the Character of the Saints, and raises their Dignity : And therefore he represents them as having a *Property* in all Things, and speaks sublimely of them, as though they were *Possessors of Heaven and Earth.*

Now the Ground on which he builds this manner of speaking, may be set in a just and easy Light. We can properly be said to possess nothing but what turns to our Account, what is of some Service or Advantage to us ; and therefore in the common Language of Life, we say, concerning a rich covetous Man, *he is a poor Wretch, he has nothing*, because he receives Benefit from so small a Part of his Estate : And, in truth, he has no more than he enjoys or uses. Now the true Christian reaps the Benefit of all Things ; And God, the great God, the *Possessor of Heaven and Earth*, makes all Things work together for the Benefit of his People ; and in this Sense it is that *all Things are theirs.*

All things shall turn to their Advantage, either, (1.) for the *Support and Comfort of their temporal Life* ; or (2.) for the *Beginning and Improvement of their spiritual Life* ; or (3.) for their *Possession and Enjoyment of Life-eternal.*

But instead of collecting all the Treasures and Riches of the Saints, under these three general Heads, I shall chuse rather to make a Paraphrase on the whole Verse of my Text, and thus discover the Interest that a Christian has in the Persons and Things of Earth and Heaven. *Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas,*



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*Cephus, or the World, or Life, or Death, or Things present, or Things to come, all are yours.*

I. *The Ministers of the Gospel are yours.*

Is Paul appointed an *Apostle separated to the Gospel* by the immediate Call of *Christ*; 'tis for your sakes, O ye *Corinthians*, that he was chosen and called! *Christ* had you in his Eye, and upon his Heart, when he stopped him in the midst of his Fury and Persecution; when he overwhelmed him with Glory, in the Road to *Damascus*; and from a Persecutor, made an Apostle of him, and a Preacher of the Cross of *Jesus*: For he designed then to send him to *Corinth*, to call you from Heathenism, and to save your Souls.

Is Paul a Man of Learning and of bright Parts? Is he endowed with profound Knowledge of divine Mysteries above his Brethren? Is he fit to Preach for the Conversion of the *Heathen* World, and to write the great Things of God for the Church, in all future Ages? 'Tis for your sakes, O Christians, that he is thus endowed: 'Tis for you, O Believers in *Great Britain*, though you live, as it were, at the Ends of the Earth, and in the old Age of the World; 'tis even for you that he was appointed and inspired to write his Epistles to *Rome*, *Corinth*, and *Ephesus*, and the rest of the early Churches. 'Tis by his Writings, that you have been enlightened in the Mysteries of *Christ*, and the Wonders of the Gospel. Almost seventeen hundred Years ago was he made the Apostle of the *Gentiles*, and that partly for your sakes. *Paul himself is yours.*

Was *Apollos* an elegant Man, and mighty in the Scriptures? 'Twas for you, O primitive Christians, that he had the Gift of Oratory bestowed on him. Has any Minister in our Age and Place of Abode a peculiar Talent of Eloquence, hath he a Vivacity of Fancy, a Strength of Expression, a sweet Accent, and a commanding Voice? It is designed for the

Conviction and Salvation of your Souls. Can he thunder like the Voice of God on Mount *Sinai*, and flash the Terrors of the Law, like Lightning, upon your Consciences? 'Tis to awaken you out of your carnal Slumber and Security in Sin, to make you fly from the Wrath to come, and cry out, *What shall I do to be saved?* Can he set the Blessings of Salvation in a glorious and convincing Light? 'Tis to persuade you to accept them. Has he the Art of striking the Passions, and touching the inward Springs of the Soul? Can he spread the Invitations of Grace before you, in alluring Language? Can he dissolve his Thoughts in the tenderest Accents of Speech, and moisten his Words with his Tears? 'Tis all design'd as a Means, in the Hands of the Spirit, to melt your Hearts to Repentance, and to soften your Souls to receive the Impressions of the Gospel? Has he the holy Skill of displaying the Glories of our blessed Saviour? Can he set off the Miracles of his Life? Can he talk of his bleeding and his dying Love in the most affecting Manner? Can he paint him in the Honours of his Resurrection, his Triumph, and his exalted State, in most magnificent Colours? 'Tis all for the Assistance of your Faith, the kindling of your Love, and the Advancement of your Joy. Not *Paul* only, but *Apollos* is yours.

Is *Cephas* or *Peter* a Man of Boldness and Courage, to defend the Truths of the Gospel, or to speak for *Christ* amongst Infidels? 'Tis to lead you onward as the Soldiers of *Christ*, through the midst of Dangers, and to encourage you to face the persecuting World bravely, in the Profession of the Cross.

Or is the Character of *Cephas*, as an Instructor of the Young, and a condescending Preacher to Babes? He has this Talent given him for your sakes too, to feed you, while you were Babes in *Christ*, with the sincere Milk of the Word, to set be-  
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fore you the *first Principles of the Oracles of God*, and assist you to imbibe the *Rudiments of Christianity*, before you were fit to receive the more exalted *Doctrines*, and be *fed with stronger Meat*. Thus not only *Paul and Apollos*, but *Cephas is yours*.

All the *Officers in the Church*, both *Ordinary and Extraordinary*, are appointed for your sakes. It is for you that *Christ ascended on high*, and gave *Gifts to Men*. Read and believe it, *Eph. iv. 11, 12*. And he gave some *Apostles*; and some *Prophets*; and some *Evangelists*; and some *Pastors and Teachers*; for the *perfecting of the Saints*, for the *Work of the Ministry*, for the *Edifying the Body of Christ*.

And as the *Gifts and Graces of the Ministers of the Gospel* are designed for the *Benefit of the Church*, so the *outward Circumstances that attend them*, their *Sorrows*, and their *Joys*, are ordained for the *Advantage of Christians*: And *St. Paul* rejoices in it, *2 Cor. i. 3, 4, 6*. *Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of Mercies, and the God of all Comfort, who comforteth us in all our Tribulations, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any Trouble, by the Comfort wherewith we our selves are comforted of God; And whether we be afflicted, 'tis for your Consolation and Salvation, which appears to be effectual, when ye endure the same Sufferings which we also suffer. Or whether we be comforted, 'tis for your Consolation and Salvation, i. e. we preach more effectually from our own Experience.*

Thus wha soever be the *Characters*, or the *Talents*, or the *Circumstances of Life* that attend your *Ministers*, they are ordained of *God* for some *valuable Purposes* to you.

II. *This World is yours*. Not only the *Ministers of the Gospel*, but the *World*, and the *Things of it* are yours. 'Tis for your sakes, O *Believers*, that the *World stands*! For when *Sin* entered into it by *Adam*, the first *Man*, there was a *Curse* spread over

it; and perhaps immediate Destruction had attended it, but for the sake of the Children of God, who were appointed to be born in successive Ages, amongst the Posterity of *Adam*, among the Children of Men. 'Tis for the sake of the Elect, who were given to *Christ* before the World was, that this Earth, and these lower Heavens are continued in Being. This Earth abides as a Stage of Action, proper for a State of Trial for the Saints, and when the last Saint is born, and his State of Trial is finish'd, the *World and the Works of it shall be burnt up together*.

'Tis for you, O Christians, that *these Heavens*, or (shall I say) this Globe of Earth rolls round in its daily and yearly Courses, and the *Sun* and the *Moon* send out their brighter or paler Beams, to light you onward in your Way to Glory. The Morning breaks for you to give you Day-light, that you may work for God: And the Evening spreads its long thick Shadows over the Nations, to determine a time for your Repose and Refreshment. The Darknefs and the Light are yours, during your Continuance in the Flesh. When all your Work here is done, these lower *Heavens shall be folded up like an old Garment, as a Vesture shall they be changed*; they shall flee away and be no more.

Survey the *Trees* and the *Fields*, how they bring forth Food for you. The *Beasts* of the Earth grow and are nourished for your Conveniency; they were born, and live, and die for your Support and Nourishment. The *Winds* blow to purge the Air for you, and to keep it wholesome, while God has appointed you to breathe in it. The *Fountains* bubble, and the Rivers flow to quench your Thirst. *Flax* and *Wool* are ordained for your Covering, and the Silk-worm is set to his shining Task, that some of your Garments may be soft and easy: The *Beasts of the Earth are at Peace with you*, and you are in league with the *Stones of the Field*, Job v. 23. O happy and glorious State of the Children of God.

*Christ*



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*Christ*, in his providential Management of all Things in this World, has a chief Regard to his own People. The Wicked of the Earth who dwell among the Saints, come in for a Share of the common good Things of Life, chiefly as they are Instruments of the Providence of *Christ*, for some known or unknown Benefit to his Church.

I might tell you also, that if you are Christians indeed, then tho' your ungodly Neighbours may have a rightful Civil Property in many good Things of the World, yet you have a *better and sweeter Interest* in the earthly Blessings which you possess. You can taste the Love of a Father in them, and the Kindness of a reconciled God. They are common Benefits to the World, but they are made as it were special Blessings to you. They are put into your Hand by a better Covenant: They are sanctified to your Use: The World itself becomes a Means to raise your Hearts towards God. And whereas Wealth, and Honours, and the plenteous Enjoyments of Life, become a Temptation and a Snare to the Wicked; and, through the Corruption of their Natures, divide their Souls from God and Heaven, the same Things are made happy Instruments in the Hand of the Mediator, to furnish you out for eminent Service, and to help you onward to a better World.

III. *Life and Death are yours.* *Life*, with all the comfortable Attendants of it; or even with all its Difficulties and Vexations, 'tis still designed for your Advantage: And *Death*, as terrible as it is in itself, shall appear to be a Benefit to you. But I insist no longer on this Head, at present, because I design it to be the Subject of following Discourses.

IV. *Things present, whether visible or invisible, and Things to come, are all yours.*

1. *Visible Things present are yours.* I have shew'd you in part already, how the Wheels of Nature are rolling

rolling for you. This lower Creation stands and moves for your Sakes, for your Relief and Support, while you are travelling to Heaven. The present Posture of Things in this World, the daily Scenes of Life are continued or changed, and still over-ruled by divine Providence for your Good; *Kingdoms, and Laws, and Governments*, are established among Men for your Safety: If the World were without all Government, and all Things run into Confusion, the Saints, with all their earthly Comforts, would become the Plunder and Property of the Wicked continually. The Princes of the Earth, and the political Constitutions of Nations, are designed to be a Screen and Defence to the People of God, who dwell among them: For if *these Foundations are destroy'd, What can the Righteous do?* Psalm xi. 3. *The Wicked would bend their Bow, and make ready their Arrow upon the String; and they would not only in private, but publickly shoot at the Upright in Heart:* There would be neither Life nor Safety for a Christian. Yet, on the other hand, when *Christ*, in the Course of his Providence, brings Confusion on States and Kingdoms, and when he suffers the Wicked of the Earth, like wild Beasts of the Wilderness, to spoil, devour and destroy, 'tis usually design'd by his Wisdom, as a Season of proper Trial for his own People, and that Country becomes a Scene of their glorious Sufferings. *Christ*, who is Head over all Things, sets up and pulls down Tyrants, or good Princes, as may best serve the Counsels of his Father's Mercy, and his own kind Designs for his chosen and redeemed People.

And as the whole *World of Nature*, and the present Affairs of Nations are managed by *Christ*, for the Good of the Church; so the *World of Grace*, and the *Affairs of his Sanctuary*, and his Kingdoms on Earth, are all ordained for the Benefits of the Saints. Christians, why did he separate you from the World, and call you out of the Wilderness, and make you a cho-  
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*sen Nation, a peculiar People?* Was it not for your Advantage? Why did he write his Word? Why did he ordain Ministers and holy Institutions? Was it not for our Edification? Were not the Seals of the Covenant given to assist your Faith, by the Aid of your Senses, and by this Means to enflame your Love, and exalt your Joy? Are not the Precepts of the Word written to direct you in the Way of Duty? Are not the Threatnings pronounced to awaken your Fear, and guard you from Sin and Folly? And are not all the Promises of the Gospel given to comfort your Souls, to support your Spirits, and give a sweet Taste of Glory beforehand?

Whatsoever *temporal Circumstances* attend you in this present Life, whether they are *painful or pleasant*, they are all the Appointments of your heavenly Father for your real Interest. Are you at Peace in the midst of Plenty, and does every Thing around you smile upon you? 'Tis that your Hearts may be raised to Thankfulness, and your Lips tuned to Praise. Do you labour under Pain or Sickness? 'Tis to wean you from Flesh and Blood, to put you in Mind, that this Tabernacle is falling, to awaken your Hearts to insure a better Habitation on high. Do you want Food or Raiment? 'Tis to make you remember, that you are in the Wilderness, and to call your Meditations upward to your Father's House, where *there is Bread enough, and to spare*. Are you scorned and reviled by the basest of Men? Are you persecuted or imprisoned and treated with Rudeness or Cruelty? 'Tis to try and prove your suffering Graces, that your Faith, Courage, and Patience may shine as Gold that has past through the Furnace. Are you called to seal the Truth and Testimony of *Jesus* with your Blood? 'Tis to prepare you for the Crowns of Glory that are laid up for Martyrs.

This Thought leads me onward in the Survey of this rich *Inventory of a Christian*, and carries my Thoughts into the *invisible Regions*, and into far distant *Futurities*.

2. Not *Things present* only in this *visible World*, but *Things invisible in other Worlds*, are also yours, and were appointed for your Benefit. These are number'd by the Apostle among the Riches and Possessions of the Saints.

Is there a *Heaven* built on High, with many Palaces of Light in it? They were built and furnished for your Reception. 'Tis the *Inheritance of the Saints in Light*, Col. i. Are there Mansions of unknown Glory, well prepared by our Lord *Jesus Christ*, since his Ascent to Heaven? He assures you in his last Words, that they are prepared for you; *John xiv. 2, 3. In my Father's House are many Mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you, I go to prepare a Place for you. And if I go and prepare a Place for you; I will come again and receive you to myself; that where I am there ye may be also.* Each of these Mansions stands waiting for those Saints, for whom they are provided; and they are all adorned with rich and magnificent Furniture, in the perfect Beauty of Holiness.

The *Angels*, in their shining Orders, are ordained to be your Attendants: Those holy Inhabitants of the upper blessed World, *incamp round about those that fear the Lord*, Psal. xxxiv. 7. and are appointed as Guards to his Children, by their heavenly Father. *Are they not all ministering Spirits sent forth to minister to them who shall be Heirs of Salvation?* Heb. i. ult. They wait upon your dying Beds, and convey your Souls to the Bosom of Abraham, *Luke xvii. 22.* Happy Souls, who have so illustrious a Guard, so secure a Convoy to the far distant and unknown Regions of Light and Joy!

The very *Hell* that is provided to punish impenitent Sinners, tho' we cannot say it was built for you, Christians; yet it has been of glorious and terrible Service, to awaken your Souls out of a natural and guilty State. When the Spirit of God in the Ministry of his Word has opened the Mouth of Hell, and brought



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brought the Flashes of that Furnace into your Face; it has awaken'd your Consciences in time past, and driven you to seek Refuge in the Arms of *Jesus*, who *delivers us from the Wrath to come*. Thus Hell it self is constrained to pay a Tribute towards the Salvation of the Saints.

And the *Devils* themselves who dwell there, with all their fiery Temptations, have been but as Under-workers for our final Good; they are as Slaves to *Christ*, the great Refiner, who design'd to purify your Souls by those very Methods of Temptation, which those evil Spirits made use of on purpose to destroy you. Thus the Ministers of divine Wrath, to Sinners are become Instruments of your Benefit. When *Satan* has desired to winnow you as *Wheat*, *Christ* has pray'd for you that your Faith fail not, and he has taken care that by this Winnowing you might be purified, that nothing might fly away but the empty Chaff; and that you might appear in the Sight of *Christ* as purer Corn. Now if Hell, and the wicked Inhabitants of it, may be constrained to serve your Interest, and to promote your Happiness, surely there is nothing in all the Creation, but may turn to your Advantage. O divine Privilege, when the Creatures that are under the deserved Curse of God, are thus made to subserve your Blessedness!

3. But not only present *Invisibles*, but even all future unseen Things are yours too. The Morning of the Resurrection is appointed for your Glory; and the great Trumpet is put into the Hands of the Arch-Angel, to awaken your sleeping Dust into Immortality. *Jesus* the Lord himself shall descend from Heaven to call you from the Grave: And tho' ye were dead, ye shall hear the Voice of the Son of God and live. The great Day of Judgment, and all the Solemnities of it, are ordained for your Honour, to publish your Victories over Sin and Satan, before the Face of the whole Creation, to pronounce you openly acquitted  
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and justified before Men and Angels, to proclaim you the Sons and Daughters of the most high God, and determine your State to everlasting Blessedness.

Are there Crowns of infinite Value laid up in Heaven? Are there Rewards of Glory there, immense Rewards, and of endless Duration? 'Tis to crown your Labours, your Conflicts, your Christian Race; 'Tis to reward your Sufferings, your Patience, and your Conquest: And the Day of Glory is stretch'd out to all Everlasting, that your Happiness may know no End. *Thus Things present, and Things to come, are all yours*; and there is nothing in Time or Eternity, which can come within the Reach or Notice, but in some of these Senses shall subserve your Interest, and turn to your Advantage.

This is the genuine Sense, and this the true Limitation of these Words, *All Things are yours*.

The second Thing proposed in this Discourse, was to prove, that *notwithstanding the limited Sense of these Words, yet the true Christian has a richer Treasure in them, than all the worldly Wealth of the Sinner*.

And without multiplying Particulars, the Proof of it will sufficiently appear in these four Things.

I. *The Treasure of the meanest Saint is vastly more large and extensive, than that of the richest Sinner*. Let the wicked Man point to his Heaps of Money, and run over the Names of his Farms and Mannors, and call himself the Lord and Master of them all; 'tis but a narrow and poor Survey, that a few Pieces of shining Earth can give us; or the Fields that lie within the Prospect of a Mile or two, when compared with this vast and universal Treasure, *All things are yours*! 'Tis true, Christians, that you have not the Civil Property and Power over the Earth or the Heavens; but you receive a divine Advantage from all Things, and that's more than the Sinner can say concerning any one thing that he possesses in the Way of Civil Property.

II. This

II. This *Treasure of the Saints* is more secure, and more durable, than any thing that a Sinner enjoys; therefore the Apostle calls the Wealth of this World, *uncertain Riches, that are not to be trusted in*, 1 Tim. vi. 17. *Riches make to themselves Wings, and fly away as an Eagle toward Heaven*, and leave the Owner poor and destitute: Many a wealthy Man who flourished Yesterday, in abundance of Ease and Plenty, may be stripped of all to Morrow, and want the common Supports of Nature. What Possessions soever are built upon the Foundations of *Civil Property*, may be taken away from the Saint or the Sinner, by Robbing and Plunder, by Cheating and Knavery, by Inundations of Water, or the Rage of Fire, or by the Invasion of a foreign Enemy; but the beneficial Interest that a Christian has in *all Things*, is preserved to him by the Covenant of Grace. He may be stripped of all earthly Possessions, but the Loss of his temporal Estate shall turn to his real Benefit, as well as the Possession of it. Losses and Crosses, as well as Plenty and Peace, are number'd among the *Items* of his Inventory, and make up his Treasure; so that though the outward Scenes of Things on Earth are perpetually changing, his real and everlasting Treasure is the same; for all Things that appear in Nature, that occur in present Providence, or shall arise in future Ages, shall work for his Advantage: He may lose Money or Lands as well as a Sinner; but that very Loss shall turn to his Gain.

This Sort of Treasure he cannot be dispossessed of by *Death* itself; for when he quits his visible Interest in all Things in this lower World, he enters into a new World of Spirits, which he has never seen; and yet all Things in that World are his too: All Things in those unknown Regions, where the departing Spirit goes, are made over to the Saint, by the same Covenant as the Things of this World; they shall all ad-  
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minister some divine Profit to him, and be a Part of his Happiness in the World to come.

III. *This Treasure of a Christian is ever growing*, at least in the Possession; for the Occurrences of every Day make some Addition to it; whereas the Wealth of Sinners is impair'd with using. The largest earthly Estate may be wasted: Money decreases daily by procuring the Supports of Life; but a Christian's Treasure still improves. He lives upon it every Day, and yet it grows still.

The Providences of God here on Earth, present us daily with some new Affairs, new Occurrences: Whether they be pleasant or painful, still the spiritual Man finds his Interest in them; and when he reviews his Account in the Evening, if his Heart has been in a proper Frame, he may write himself *Gainer*. He has possess'd the Blessings of former Years, and improv'd them: He has possess'd and enjoy'd the very Crosses and Sorrows of his former Days: He has treasured up a Store of divine Experiences, in the midst of Plenty and Want, Health and Sickness: New Scenes of Life arise, new Appearances of Things; he is still like the Bee, ready to suck Honey from every Flower that blows: He gathers his Food and his Riches from Weeds that are unsavory, as well as from the Blossoms of Perfume: If he is by this means adding daily to the Number and Strength of his Graces and Virtues, he is, as it were, treasuring up a *good Foundation for Time to come*, and (shall I be bold to say) adding Beauties and Ornaments to his Robes of Glory, and Lustre to his heavenly Crown.

IV. *This large Inheritance of a Christian is all sanctified*, which is more than can be said of any Part of a Sinner's Estate. The Riches of this World may be abused to Luxury and Debauchery, to Iniquity and sore Vexations. They may be abus'd to Profaneness and



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and Impiety, to dishonour God, and corrupt the Conversation of Men, and to ruin their Souls for ever: But this large and extensive Treasure of a Christian, is design'd for his real Happiness, as well as for the Honour of his God; whatsoever he has to do with in the World, he uses it to the Glory of his God, to the Honour of his Saviour, to the Benefit of his Fellow-Creatures, and to his own sublimest Advantage. And concerning this sacred Treasure, it may be said, that it is the Property, or in the Possession of a Christian, no farther than it is sanctified to him, or than he receives it with a sanctified Mind. *To the Pure, all Things are pure; for every thing is sanctified by the Word of God and Prayer,* 1 Tim. iv. 5. The Exercise of Piety among the Saints, puts a sort of Consecration upon all Creatures, so far as they use or enjoy them.

Thus it is made sufficiently evident, that the Treasure of a Saint vastly excels all the richest Possessions of a Sinner.

I cannot enter now upon the *third Branch of my Design*, which was to shew, *how a Christian comes to be made Heir and Possessor of all Things*. Let us therefore shut up the present Discourse with this one *Reflection*.

*Reflection. How unreasonable is it for a Christian to forsake his Profession, or his Practice, for any Thing which this World can tempt him with?* For his Treasures and Enjoyments already are greater than any Thing he can hope for in the Ways of Sin.

What a powerful Motive may be drawn hence, to persevere in Faith and Holiness? Christians, *All Things are yours*; every Thing you converse with shall turn to your Benefit; *This World*, and the other, *Things present and Things to come, Life and Death are yours*.

What valuable Pretences can the World make, to tempt you to lose this Inheritance, to quit

these Hopes, and to part with these Possessions? Can you, by complying with any Temptation, provide your self with such Riches as these; or with any Thing that shall answer the Loss of them? Sin and the World can promise you but a little, narrow share of good Things: The Gospel of *Christ gives you* a most extensive Treasure, for it bestows *all Things* upon you. The World can make nothing secure, but the Treasures of Christianity are everlasting; they reach beyond the Grave, into unknown Worlds and Ages. All the Wealth, and Pleasures, and Enjoyments of this Life *perish with the using*; but your Inheritance is ever upon the increase: as fast as Time and Providence bring forth Days, and Seasons, and new Scenes, so fast this Treasure grows; and you may receive the daily Profit of it. What can Sin and the World give you but what hath a secret Curse in it? These your Treasures are sanctified Blessings, and the Foretastes of them are design'd to assist you onward in the ways of Holiness and Peace, till you arrive at the brightest and sweetest Part of them, the full Enjoyment of God and Happiness in the upper World.

Go on then, Christians, with Zeal and Courage in the Profession of your Faith: Go on with Constancy in the Practice of Duty: Feed daily upon that Portion of your Inheritance, which your heavenly Father appoints to sustain you in your Travels homeward; and expect the rest in your Father's House. When the World would tempt you to forego your sacred Interest in the Gospel, by the alluring Offer of any temporal Enjoyments, tell the World that *Life and Death, Things present and Things to come, are yours* already: Let the World know that *Christ* has engaged and secured your Heart for ever to himself, by outbidding all that the World can offer; for he has written down and sealed your Title to a larger and richer Inheritance, and annexed it to his own:

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*Ye are joint Heirs with Christ:* And he has appointed it to stand recorded in his holy Book to the View of Men and Angels, that *All Things are yours.*

THE RECOLLECTION.

And is it possible that so worthless a Creature as I am, should be really intitled to all these Blessings? Can it be true, that so rich an Interest in the good Things of Time and Eternity belongs to me? To me, who *am less than the least of all the Mercies* of God? To me, who in the Days of Sin and Ignorance, have abused all Things, O my God, to thy Dishonour? To me, who have provoked thy Justice to strip me of all the common Blessings of Nature and Life, and to make me for ever poor and miserable? Is the Mercy of God so vast and overflowing, as not only to forgive these Provocations, and to admit me into his Favour, but to bless me also with so rich an Inheritance? Fall down prostrate, O my Soul, at the Foot of Sovereign and All-sufficient Grace. Remember thy Guilt, thy Poverty, and thy Wretchedness, and be ever humble before God thy infinite Benefactor. Mourn over all thy Unworthiness, and maintain a constant Temper of penitent Love, and Self-abasing Gratitude. I deserve to be cut off for ever, O Lord, from thine House, from thy Family, and from all the Blessings of thy Children: But thou hast call'd me to the Knowledge of thy Son *Jesus*, thou hast taught me to lay hold on the Arm of thy Salvation, thou hast made me *willing in the Day of thy Power* to renounce every Sin, to subject myself to thy Sceptre of Righteousness, and to accept the Grace of thy Gospel. Thou hast opened the Treasures of thy Love, Treasures that contain in them the good Things of Earth and Heaven, Things visible and invisible, Things present, and Things to come: And while these Treasures

stood open to my View, in the Voice of thy Gospel thou hast told me, *All is yours.*

O for an enlarged Exercise of Faith, to survey this Inheritance! to rejoice in this extensive Bounty of the most High! to read the blessed Language of this Text, and to believe it with an humble Claim and Appropriation! Surely here is enough for Faith to live upon, through all the remaining Years of my Pilgrimage, and my Hope, 'till Faith shall be turned into perfect Sight, and Hope into full and final Enjoyment.

I would not change my Portion with the richest Sinner on Earth: My *Estate is larger*, and my *Interests are more extensive*. His Gold and Silver, his Houses and Lands can reach no farther than this World and Time; but my Inheritance runs into Eternity, and my Enjoyment of it has no Period.

*My Treasures are secure* against all the Invasions and Plunder of Enemies, against all the Rage of the Winds, and Waves, and Fire; against all the Confusions of the World, against all the overwhelming Changes of Time and Nature? even against Death itself, and the last great Conflagration. These lower *Heavens may be dissolved*, the *Elements may melt with fervent Heat*, and the *Earth and the Works thereof*, with all the Fields, and the Palaces, and the Treasures of it, *may be burnt up*, but my Inheritance stands ever secure; for God himself, who is the original Creator and Possessor of all Things, has secur'd Life and Happiness to me in his Covenant: He has secur'd a Possession of every Thing that can be necessary to my Happiness, or to my eternal Life.

O that I were taught to enjoy these Blessings daily! and to observe the daily Accessions that are made to my Treasures, by all the new Scenes of Providence that are ever rising! May I be instructed to make a sanctified Improvement of them all, and thus add something hourly to my best Interest, to my everlasting



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lasting Hope! May Life itself, with all the daily Comforts and Crosses of it, minister to me some sacred Meditations, some holy and heavenly Thoughts! May a divine Consecration come down on all my Affairs and Concerns in this present State! And by a wise Improvement of all those Parcels of my Inheritance, which my heavenly Father puts into my Hands here on Earth, may I be train'd up and grow fitter daily for those brighter Talents, those more glorious Enjoyments which he keeps in reserve for me when Time shall be no more. *Amen.*





# SERMON XXXVIII.

The Christian's Treasure.

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1 COR. iii. 21.

*All Things are yours.*

**T**HERE is nothing that a wise Man can wish for in order to make him happy, but the Gospel proposes it to encourage Faith and Practice of Christians. What *Honour* is there to be enjoy'd among the Sons of Men, that is wont to gratify our Ambition, but the Gospel assures us of higher Honours than this, when it makes us the *Sons of God*? What *Pleasures* are there to be tasted in the Satisfaction of Animal Nature, but the Gospel invites us to more refin'd, and more lasting Pleasures, which are to be derived from the *Love of God*, and the *Company of our Saviour with all his Saints*? What *Riches* can be possess'd or desir'd by the most covetous Mind, but the Gospel proposes a far more extensive, a more durable, and more useful Treasure, when it tells us in the Words of my Text, *All Things are yours*?

The former Discourse has made it appear in *what Sense* these Words are to be understood: Not that we have a present Possession of all Things, a Power over them, or a Civil Right to seize and enjoy them; but the Meaning is this, that *so far as a Christian*

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*Christian can have any Thing to do with the Things of this World, or of another, Things present or to come, they shall all be made to work together for his real Good.*

It has been also proved, in the second Place, that *this Inheritance of the Saints is incomparably richer, and more valuable than any Thing which Sinners can possess.*

I proceed now to the *Third General* propos'd, and that is, to enquire *how Christians come to be Partakers of so fair and rich a Treasure.*

I. 'Tis the kind and eternal Purpose of God their Father, that it should be so. Christians, God has created all Things in the *World of Nature* with this Design, that you should derive some Benefit from them, as far as they can come within your Reach or Notice, your Service or Use: He appointed all Things in the *Counsels of his Providence*, to bear some Blessing for you: He has ordained all Things in his *Kingdom of Grace* for your Advantage; and there are unknown *Regions of Light and Glory* which he has provided for you. His Elect were ever nearest to his Heart, next to the Man *Christ Jesus*, next to his only begotten Son; for they were all *chosen in him before the Foundation of the World*, Eph. i. 4. Whether Creation or Providence, whether Nature, Grace, or Glory, *All Things are for your Sakes*, 2 Cor. iv. 15.

I would caution you again, that you are not to understand it in such an incredible Sense, as though God made every particular Creature in the upper and the lower Worlds, only to give the Possession of them to the Saints, or that he manages all his providential Kingdom, merely for the sake of his own People without any other View. No, this is stretching the Words into an Extent too large and unreasonable; for there are Millions of Creatures, Millions of Plants and Animals in Earth and Sea, that are born, and grow, and live, and die again, which the Saints of God never saw, nor know, nor shall know; nor

can they receive any immediate Benefit from them. But the Meaning is this, that *all Things whatsoever the Saints can or shall have to do with in this or other Worlds, were intended to yield some Profit to them, and especially while they maintain their Character as the Children of God, and walk as becomes their Dignity and their Profession.* In all God's general Counsels of Creation, and Providence, and Grace, he kept his Eye (as I may say) still upon his Saints: He designed their Good in ten thousand Instances, in his great and glorious Works, and resolved that nothing in all his Kingdoms should interfere with their last and best Interest.

Though what he has written down in the *Book of his Decrees*, is read only at large by his Son *Christ Jesus*, yet he has written out a sweet Abstract of it in the *Book of his Promises*, that the Saints on Earth might read and know it. *Rom. viii. 28. And we know that all Things work together for good, to them that love God, to them who are the Called according to his Purpose.* 'Twas for their sakes the Promises were written, that they might have not only a present Relish of divine Blessings, but a sweet Foretaste of Joys long to come.

The Blessings of the Children of God were numbered up, and written down originally for them, in the Book of God's everlasting Counsels; and in the Book of his Word has he copied out for them, *the Blessings of Heaven from above, and of the Deep from beneath; the precious Things brought forth by the Sun, and under the Influence of the Moon; the chief Things of the ancient Mountains on Earth, so far as is needful for them here, and the precious Things of the everlasting Hills of Paradise hereafter.*

Does the great Creator and Lord of all keep the Wheels of Nature in their settled Courses? 'Tis for his People's good: *The Stars in their Courses shall fight for Israel:* Or does he countermand Nature in any of its Motions, and bid the *Sun stand still in Gibeon,*  
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*and the Moon in the Valley of Ajalon?* 'Tis that the Armies of his People may have long Day-light, to subdue their Enemies. *Hail-Stones* and *Thunder* shall break out of the *Clouds* to destroy the *Canaanites*, when *Israel* is at War with them; But if *Israel* want Bread in the Wilderness, the *Clouds* shall drop down *Manna*, and give them Bread from Heaven. The Lord gave up *Egypt* with her Armies to the Waves of the *Red-Sea*, for the Ransom and Redemption of his People: He gave *Ethiopia* and *Seba* to the Sword for the Safety of his Servant *Jacob*. Isa. xliii. 7. *I have loved thee, O Israel, therefore I gave Men for thee, and People for thy Life.*

And 'tis no Wonder that God has given all Things to his Children, since he has given himself to them, and told them, *I am your God*: 'Tis no Wonder he has bestowed all other Things upon them, since he has bestowed his Son upon them: His own, his only Son, who is dearer to him than all the Creation, Rom. viii. 32. *He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him freely give us all Things?*

II. The Saints have an Interest in all Things, for *Christ* is made Lord over all Things for his People's good, Eph. i. 22. *God hath put all Things under his Feet, and gave him to be Head over all Things to his Church.* Thus the Names of the Saints are, as it were, inserted into that divine Patent that exalts and constitutes *Christ* Lord of all.

And indeed, *Christ* has not only a Right to all Things by the meer Donation of the Father, but it may be said, he has purchased all Things for his own Honour, and his People's Good. *Because he was obedient unto Death, therefore God has so highly exalted him, and made him Lord of the Dead and the Living,* Phil. ii. and Rom. xiv. And, perhaps, 'tis in this Sense, that the Inheritance of the Saints may be called the purchased Possession, Eph. i. 14.

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Now, Christians, since all the Affairs of Nature, Grace, and Glory, are put into the Hands of such a Friend in Trust for you, that they may be managed and employ'd for your Advantage, 'tis as well, nay, 'tis much better, than if all Things were at present in your own Possession, *i. e.* under your present State of Weakness and Folly; for his Wisdom and Goodness shall govern all for your truest Interest. *Ye are Christ's*, so the Apostle expresses it in the Verse next to my Text: And *Christ*, who has all in his Hands, will take care of you who are his own.

*Christ* is made *Heir of all Things*, Heb. i. 2. And if ye belong to *Christ*, then *are ye Heirs of God, and Joint-Heirs with Christ*, Rom. viii. 17. And the express Promise of the Father confirms it, that *all Things are yours*, Rev. xxi. 7. *He that overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God, and he shall be my Son.* Ye are the *Members of the Body*, and *Christ* is the Head, 1 Cor. xii. 27. Now the Members must in their Measure become Sharers of what the Head possesses. In your Proportion, O Christians, you shall have Communion with *Christ* your Lord, in his Royalties and his wide Dominion; for he hath promised *that ye shall sit down on his Throne*, when ye have overcome your Enemies, *even as he overcame*, and is *set down on the Throne with his Father*, Rev. iii. 21. Ye are one with *Christ*, and therefore in your Measure, O Believers, and according to your Capacity, ye shall possess and enjoy all Things which he possesses, so far as is requisite for your Benefit in this World, and your truest Happiness for ever.

III. *The Saints are actually invested with this Privilege, by believing on the Son of God, by accepting the Covenant of his Grace, by receiving Christ Jesus the Saviour, according to the appointed Methods of the Gospel.* When a poor, destitute, guilty, and perishing Creature is made willing by divine Grace, to give up himself to *Christ* as his Saviour and his Lord,  
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he is divested of his Guilt, he is cloathed with the *Robes of Salvation*, he is translated out of a State of Sin, Poverty, and Wretchedness, into a State of rich Grace, and becomes a Child of God, and an Heir of all Things. A living Faith, which has all the Springs of Holiness in it, is ordained to carry in it all the Springs of Treasure and Felicity. This unites the Soul to *Christ*, this gives an humble Claim to all the Blessings laid up in the eternal Decrees and Purposes of God; Blessings purchased by the Blood of his Son *Jesus*; Blessings promised in the Word of the Gospel, wherein all Things are given for a Possession to the Children of the *Most High*.

IV. All Things may be said to belong to the Saints, or shall turn to their Advantage, because the *blessed Spirit is given them, to teach them to improve all Things for their own Benefit.* 1 Cor. ii. 12. *We have received the Spirit, which is of God, that we might know the Things that are freely given us of God:* And that not only that Christians might know what their Treasures are, but learn how to make a right Use of them too.

They are taught by the holy Spirit, to receive the common Blessings of Nature from the Hands of God, as a Father, and a Friend, and a God in Covenant: And they rejoyce in them as such, with humble Thankfulness; they are instructed to derive useful Meditations from the Sun, Moon, and Stars; and to read the Wisdom, the Power, and the Glory of their Creator, and their Father there, and to rejoyce in his Goodness. The peaceful State of Kingdoms, or Battels, Wars and Earthquakes, and the Convulsion of Nations, are all made useful Lessons to a Child of God; and he gains something from all of them, by the Teachings of the blessed Spirit.

The Saints are led into an Acquaintance with the Word of God by the same Spirit too: They receive the Promises and Directions of the Gospel, through  
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the Influences of this Spirit. They derive Light, Holiness and Comfort from every Part of the Book of God; *i. e.* from the Law and the Prophets, the Histories and the Epistles, and from all the Ordinances of the Sanctuary: He teaches them to borrow some Food and Delight from *Moses* and *David*, as well as from *Peter* and *John*. He leads them through the sweet Fields of Gospel-Grace, and directs them to gather many a Flower there for their Refreshment, and to Feed on the Fruit of the Tree of Life for their Support. He shews them how to profit by the Ministry of a *Paul*, and to learn the deep Mysteries of *Christ*: He impresses on their Souls the warm and pathetick Words of an *Apollos*, and fires their Hearts thereby with Zeal and Love: He teaches his younger Disciples over again the first Lessons of Grace, which a *Cephas* had just taught them. Thus *Paul* and *Apollos*, and *Cephas* are theirs.

He instructs them how to converse with Things invisible and future by Faith, and to make use of the unseen and distant Glories of Eternity, for their present Comfort and Joy. 'Tis *the God of Hope*, who by his Spirit fills them with all Peace and Joy in believing, Rom. xv. 13.

And I might add also, that the holy Spirit is given them, and dwells in them as an *Earnest of their Inheritance* of all Things, 2 Cor. v. 6. till the Redemption of this purchased Possession, *i. e.* till it shall be redeemed, and freed from all the present Incumbrances of Sin and Satan, Eph. i. 13, 14. Then in a happy Hour shall this purchased Possession be disclosed in the fairest Light, and proclaimed to be the Property of the Saints.

To sum up all in a few Words, A Christian's Interest in all Things is well founded, and well confirm'd. They are his by the original Purpose of *God the Father*, when he created all things; 'twas his Design that his chosen People should receive Benefit from them. They are his by the Appointment of  
divine



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divine Providence, that all things shall work together for his Good. They are his; for *Christ the Son of God* has purchased a Dominion over all things, that he may manage them for the Service of his redeemed Ones. They are his, because *the Spirit* teaches him to derive some Advantage from all things by Faith and holy Meditation. God has given *himself* to the Saints as their Portion for ever: He has given *his own Son* for them as a Ransom from Death; he has given *his Spirit* to them, as the Principle of their Life: And in this View, we may rise in the Language of Faith, and say in the Words of the blessed Apostle, *How shall he not herewith freely give us all Things?*

Thus have I made it appear in what Sense *all Things are yours*, and upon what Foundations this glorious Privilege is built, I proceed in the last Place, to consider *what use may be made of this Discourse.*

1st Use. It affords a *Word of Mourning and Terror* to *obstinate and impenitent Sinners.* Are all things made beneficial to the Saints? Think with your selves then what you lose, because you are not of that Number. If you live and die in this sinful State, you have a comfortable Interest in nothing: Nothing works for your real Benefit. Your abuse of all things that you have any thing to do with, takes away the true Pleasure and Enjoyment of what you possess, and turns them into a Curse to you instead of a Blessing. *Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or this World, or Life, or Death, or Things present, or Things to come, nothing is yours; for ye are not Christ's.* And ye shall reap no final and lasting Advantage from any thing, if you persist in a sinful and impenitent State; for ye are without God in the World, without *Christ*, and without Hope.

Do you sit under the *Ministry of Paul*, who spreads the glorious Light of the Gospel around you? But the *God of this World hath blinded your Minds*, that this divine Light should not reach them: Even the

Preaching

Preaching of *Paul* is a *savour of Death* unto you, if you live and die without the Faith and Love of *Christ*. Do you hear the zealous and pathetick Language of *Apollos*? But your Heart perhaps grows the harder under it: You resist the affectionate Entreaties of the Gospel, from the Lips of that eloquent Preacher. And even *Apollos*, whose Soul is wont to melt with Compassion for perishing Sinners, shall rise up in Judgment against you. And as for the plain and condescending Ministry of *Cephas*, you despise the Man and his Sermons together; therefore you can get no Benefit by them. Neither *Paul*, nor *Apollos*, nor *Cephas* is yours.

Well, if *spiritual* Things are not yours, you hope, however, that you have a Property in Things *temporal*: 'If the Blessings of the Church don't belong to you, yet you claim a good Share in *this World*, and the Blessings of it: You feed deliciously, you are drest in gay Colours and Gold, and you have Wealth laid up in Store for many Years to come. Poor vain Creatures! What is all your Treasures? What is your Property in it? A sorry Property in Lands, and a large Estate, when not a Clod of the Earth, nor a Penny of the Money shall turn to your real and lasting Benefit! I grant that you possess some of the good things of this World indeed. But your Riches and Plenty are not real and proper Blessings, while you are afar from *Christ*, and Strangers to him: Your own Unbelief and Impenitence, and Rebellion against God, turn all the Comforts of the World into Curses: 'Tis only the Grace of *Christ* can take off the Curse, and sanctify this World into a Blessing.

*Life* is not yours; 'tis not for your final Advantage, while you waste it in Vanity and sinful Amusements: A long Life spent in this manner, shall but add to your Guilt, and aggravate your Condemnation.

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*Death* is not a Benefit, but a dreadful Hour to you, for it delivers you over to the full Power of *Satan*, that cruel Tormentor, and opens the Scene of your everlasting Sorrows.

*Things present* are not Blessings to you, while you resolve to continue in this sinful State. You abuse the Day-light, and waste it in Trifles or in Crimes; or at best you spend it in an eager Pursuit of the Things of the World, with the Neglect of God. The Night is given to recruit Nature for new Services, but you seize the Shadows of the Evening to make a Screen for your secret Iniquities, and hide your Sins behind the Curtains of Midnight.

You feed on the Fruits of the Earth, and other rich Provisions of divine Bounty; but, perhaps, you make them Instruments of shameful Intemperance: Or, at best, you lay out the Strength of them in empty Follies, or in low earthly Designs, without a Thought of God or Heaven. The Morning and the Evening wait upon you in long Successions, but you are heaping up Iniquities from Morning to Evening. You walk daily in the Paths of Death, and the Sun-beams do but light you onward to everlasting Darkness. You are nourished by your Food for the Day of Slaughter. Daily and hourly you abuse the Goodness of God, and even these abused Blessings of his Goodness shall call for greater Degrees of Vengeance at his awful Judgment-Seat. Thus neither the Light of the Sun, nor the Fruits of the Earth, neither Day nor Light, *are yours*; for you abuse them to sinful Purposes, and they yield you no real Profit.

And if *Things present* are not yours, if ye have no solid and lasting Benefit by them, much less can you pretend to claim any comfortable Share in the *Things that are to come*. There's a Heaven of Happiness provided for the Saints, but you are utterly unprepared to fulfil the Business of it, or to taste the Blessedness. There is no Room nor Place there for you.

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There is nothing glorious and delightful among all the Promises of God, or all the joyful Scenes of the World to come, that you can claim any Title to, nor have you any Interest in them. When Hell shall open its Mouth indeed, to receive Millions of the Damned, according to the final Sentence of the Judge, there you will find a Place and Room provided for you; but 'tis an uneasy and dreadful one. *Hell is yours*, the Vengeance of God is yours, endless Misery is yours; you have *been treasuring up Wrath against the Day of Wrath*; and you can claim nothing but this painful Portion, this dismal and everlasting Inheritance.

And can you be content with such a Portion as this is, while the Saints are Inheritors of all that is holy and happy, both in this World and the next? O may your busy Thoughts be awakened betimes, and make you ever restless and uneasy in your present wretched Estate? Return to the Lord in humble Mourning, for all your past Iniquities: Return to God speedily, from whom you have wickedly departed: Loath your selves because of your Abominations, and abandon every Idol: *Say to him, My Father*, in the Spirit of Faith and Penitence, and he will *put you among the Children, and give you a goodly Heritage*, Jer. iii. 19.

Seek Acquaintance with *Jesus* the Son of God, the Saviour, the Lord and Heir of all Things; commit your Souls to his Hands, resign your selves entirely to his Grace, that he may change your unholy Natures by his Spirit, that he may cleanse away your Guilt by the Blood of his Atonement, that he may give you an Interest in his own Riches; then the Covenant of his Love shall sanctify to you all the Enjoyments of Earth and Time, and make you Possessors of all the good Things in Heaven and Eternity.

*2d Use.* This Doctrine discovers to us the *Glory of the new Covenant*. A blessed Covenant indeed that has



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has given so rich a Treasure to Creatures so unworthy! We are Sinners, and deserve *nothing*, yet when we believe in the Son of God, the Gospel gives us in our Measure the Inheritance and Possession of *all Things*.

*Adam* was made Lord of this lower World; this Earth, and the Creatures that dwell on it were put into his Hands, all things below were given him for his Use, his Support, and his Delight. Thus Mankind, consider'd in the *first Adam*, in his innocent Estate, were *Lords of all*. But by one Man, Sin enter'd into the World; and by that Sin, *Adam* has forfeited his Sovereignty and Dominion, with all his large Possession of the Creatures, both for himself and for us. When the Sentence came forth from the Mouth of God, *Cursed be the Ground for thy sake*, the Curse fell on all this lower World, and did, as it were, make a Seizure of the Creatures out of the Hands of *Adam* the great Sinner. They are no more his in that sanctified Manner, for his real and final Benefit, as they were before: They now become Instruments of Temptation and Sin, Pain, and Sorrow, and Misery. But the *Covenant of Grace* restores all back again to us in and by the *second Adam*, who is the Lord of the new World, and under this Character, is *Possessor of all Things*: And a sanctified Use of all Things is given to us again, in and by *Christ Jesus*. O glorious Covenant, that can take away the Curse from Creatures, and make them become a Blessing to the Saints!

But there is a further Glory in it still; for our Possession of all Things in the *second Adam*, is far more secure than it was in the *First*. This rich and extensive Treasure is put into the Hands of *Christ* our Mediator, our Head, and our Surety for us, that we mayn't abuse our Possession by Sin to our own Ruin; and that we mayn't forfeit our Inheritance the second time, and so lose it for ever.

3d Use. This Doctrine yields *sweet Consolation to a poor afflicted Saint, who is taught to make a right Improvement of it.* The Gospel should teach a Christian in these Circumstances such divine Language as this. "Am I poor and despised by the Great and Rich of this World, yet I trust I am made a Child of God by his renewing Grace, and the Promise gives me a *Right to all Things.* God my Father has engaged that *all things shall work together for my Good.* He has made me a Joint-Heir with his best beloved Son Jesus, and has given me a fair and large Inheritance. I shall be Possessor of every Comfort amongst the Creatures that is necessary to my supreme Interest, and my final Happiness, and God himself is my eternal Portion.

"What if I cannot read my Name and my Title to Lands and Houses, to green Fields and Palaces, in large Conveyances and Writings under the Seal of Men; but I can read my Name as a Christian in the Covenant of Grace, under the Seal of God, and the Blood of his Son, and there I find that *all Things are mine.* While I survey the Gardens of a rich Sinner, every Herb and Flower there gives me more Sweetness than he can find in them all: For I can converse with God my Maker, and my Father, in every Herb, and every Flower. While I walk amongst the Trees of my Neighbours Fields, they yield me their refreshing Shade, and compose my Thoughts to divine Meditation. I can lift up my Eyes to the stately Building where my Neighbour dwells, and raise my Thoughts thence to the Mansions of heavenly Glory: Then I rejoice to think how much my Inheritance and my Mansion there exceeds the most magnificent Structure on Earth. Thus his Fields, and his Gardens, and his stately Dwelling afford a divine Delight to me, which perhaps the earthly Possessor of them knows nothing of: And though I have almost no-

thing

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" *thing* that I can call my own on Earth, yet in this  
" Sense, *I possess all Things.* My God hath given  
" me so much of the good things of this World, as  
" he saw needful and proper for my real Interest :  
" And surely if I might have had all things within  
" my immediate Reach, and under my Sovereignty, I  
" would not lay hold of more of them (if I were truly  
" wise) than would promote my Welfare.

" Do I sit at the Foot-stool of the Rich in the  
" House of God ; or am I but a Door-keeper in  
" the Sanctuary, yet I can there hear *Paul* declare  
" the sublime Mysteries of the Gospel, and while  
" he reveals the Wonders of God's eternal Love,  
" my Heart within me believes, and adores, and  
" rejoices. *Apollos* entertains me with most affe-  
" ctionate Discourses of the Grace of *Christ*, and  
" his Glory ; my Faith rises high, my Love is  
" kindled to him whom my Eyes have not seen, I  
" believe in him, I love him, and my Joy grows  
" almost *unspeakable.* I remember the former In-  
" structions of *Cephas*, who taught me the first  
" Principles of this divine Religion ; and I take  
" Pleasure in those sacred Foundations. Blessed be  
" God, they are unshaken, and my Faith and Hope,  
" which were begun under his Ministry, stand for  
" ever firm. *Paul, and Apollos, and Cephas are*  
" *mine.*

" It has pleased my heavenly Father indeed, to  
" lay many Sorrows upon me in this Wilderness ;  
" but I have learnt to think and speak like a Chri-  
" stian, and say, Though I appear *as dying*, yet be-  
" hold *I live* ; though *I am chastened*, yet *I am not*  
" *killed* : Every Stroke of his Rod is given by the  
" Hand of his Love. His Rod, like the Rod of  
" *Aaron*, blossoms with divine Blessings, and brings  
" forth holy Fruit.

" These very Sorrows are sanctified to make me  
" *Partaker of his Holiness.* These Wounds that I  
" feel let out the Blood of Pride, and cure the Di-



“ stemperers of my Soul. Thus the very Sufferings  
 “ of Nature, and the Sorrows of Life *are mine* ;  
 “ I have learnt to reckon my Afflictions among my  
 “ Blessings ; they work for my Profit. *Whether*  
 “ *Peace or Pain, all are mine.*

“ Besides, I solace myself in the midst of my  
 “ Poverty and Distress with this sweet Meditation,  
 “ that the less I enjoy of temporal Comforts, and  
 “ the Delights of this World, if I improve my Suf-  
 “ ferings and Sorrow well, there is the more Joy  
 “ and Glory laid up for me in the World to come.”

*My light Afflictions, which are but for a Moment, are working for me a far more exceeding and eternal Weight of Glory, 2 Cor. iv. 17.*

“ Is my *Life* on Earth stretched out to a tiresome  
 “ Age? Heaven will be much the sweeter ; and  
 “ after many Toils, I shall have the stronger Relish  
 “ of an eternal Rest. Or does *Death* make haste  
 “ toward me in younger Years, and bring my Body  
 “ quickly down to the Dust? My Soul then is but  
 “ dismissed the sooner to the Building on high that  
 “ is prepared for me ; for *whether Life, or Death,*  
 “ *all are mine.*

“ When I cast my Eyes around, and survey the  
 “ *present Frame of things*, the Sun in his daily Circuit,  
 “ and the Moon and Stars in their nightly Courses,  
 “ my Faith assures me they are all employed in rol-  
 “ ling the Months and Hours away, that stand be-  
 “ tween me and immortal Happiness : And when  
 “ the Morning of the Resurrection dawns upon the  
 “ Earth, the Gospel tells me, that I have a Share  
 “ in all the rising Glories of that Day. Should the  
 “ Heavens and the Earth be shortly set on fire, if I  
 “ have but my Faith awake within me, I shall have  
 “ no Fear nor Surprise ; I myself, and all my best  
 “ Interests are out of the Reach of these Flames ;  
 “ my Treasures are of an unperishing kind. The  
 “ Period of all Things here below shall but usher  
 “ in my brightest Hours, and begin the Years of

“ my



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“ my eternal Pleasure; for the Book of God assures  
“ me, that *Things present and Things to come are*  
“ *mine.*

“ Make haste then, all ye remaining Revoluti-  
“ ons of Nature; and Days, and Months, and  
“ Ages make haste: Time cannot fly too fast for  
“ me, who have such an Eternity in view. My  
“ Lord hath told me, in his Word, *Surely I come*  
“ *quickly,* and my Heart echoes to that Voice of  
“ Beloved, *Amen, even so come Lord Jesus.*”

4th Use. This Doctrine requires the Believer to be found in the constant Exercise of Faith, that so he may be able always to survey his Inheritance, and take solid Delight in it. Otherwise, when he sustains Loss in temporal Things, and Sicknefs and Trouble attend him in the Flesh, he will be ready to judge by the meer Principles of Sense, and to think his Comforts all gone, and that he has nothing left. 'Tis Faith alone can teach a Believer to rejoice in this Treasure given him by the Covenant of Grace, when the World has taken almost all sensible Comforts from him. The natural Man with an Eye of Sense looks on things just as the Eye of a Brute-Animal beholds them, and sees nothing more than according to the common Impressions they make on Flesh and Blood: But the Eye of Faith is aided by the divine Glass of the Covenant, which, as a Microscope, discovers many Beauties, where the natural Eye, unassisted, can see nothing but Roughness and Deformity.

'Tis nothing but Faith fixing its Eyes on sanctified Losses and Crosses, sanctified Pains, and Sicknefs, and Distresses, that can enable us to reckon these among our Treasures. 'Tis nothing but the Spirit of Faith that can instruct us to think ourselves rich, because we are *Heirs of the Kingdom*, while we are poor and destitute in this lower World, James ii. 5. 'Tis the Spirit of Faith that taught the Apostle Paul to triumph under all his Infirmities, in such Language as this; *as dying, and behold we live;*

as sorrowful, and yet alway rejoicing; as poor, and yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all Things, 2 Cor. vi. 9, 10. And if we have the same Spirit of Faith we may believe and speak the same Language.

5th Use. This Doctrine forbids all murmuring at the Hand of God, though his Dispensations may have something painful and severe in them. He has given us all Things indeed, by the Promise of the Gospel, but he has not put this Treasure into our own Hands, lest we should abuse and forfeit it; but he has put it into the Hands of Christ for us; and 'tis Christ our Lord who distributes out such Parcels and Portions of our Estate to us daily, as his perfect Wisdom sees most proper to promote our real Interest.

The Christian under Sickness, perhaps will say, "Is not Life and Health writ down in the Inventory of my Inheritance?" Yes, but Sickness and Death are written down there too, and thy Saviour knows that Sickness is better for thee at this Season than Health. Don't murmur at his Hand, for God the Father has intrusted him to manage and govern all his own vast Dominions; and canst not thou intrust him to manage thy Estate, to dispose of thy Concerns, and to allot thy daily Portion to thee?

The Saint surrounded with Distress and Poverty, or Naked, and Hungry, will say, "Is not Food, and Raiment, and Peace specified in the Articles of the Covenant, and numbered among my Treasures?" Yes, but Poverty, and Hunger, and Cold, and Nakedness are there also: And thy heavenly Father sees it best to withhold Peace and Plenty from thee at present, or to give thee thy Food and Raiment but in a scanty Measure, to mortify thy Flesh, to humble thy Pride, to wean thee from the Creatures, to teach thee immediate Dependance on himself, and to fit thee for a Departure to the heavenly World.

When

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When thou art deprived therefore of one earthly Comfort after another, and the remaining good Things of this Life seem to be leaving thee, have a care of murmuring against thy God. Dare not take up the Words of *Jacob*, and say, *Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and will ye take Benjamin also? Surely all these Things are against me:* But *Jacob* was made to know, by sweet Experience, that all these things wrought for his real Advantage, and were made the Means of preserving himself and his Family too in a Day of spreading Famine and Desolation.

*6th Use.* This Doctrine forbids all Contention and Envy at our Fellow Creatures, as well as repining against God.

Is my Brother healthy and strong, while I am sick and feeble, and languishing? Does my Brother possess more of the good Things of this Life than I do? 'Tis because our common Father sees it proper to keep me shorter, and to withhold so full an Allowance from me. I have an Interest in the same large Inheritance; I am a Child of the same Family; and therefore *all things are mine* as well as his: But I have committed it intirely to the Wisdom and Goodness of our heavenly Father, to put into my Hands what Part he pleases of my large Inheritance. He is wisest, and will distribute the several Portions that he sees fittest for his different Children, and for this Reason I can't envy my Brother. 'Tis the same kind and faithful Hand that weighs and measures out my Grains and Scruples, and little Handfuls of earthly Blessings, that gives my Brother his Loads and his full Barns.

Has the Ministry of *Paul* been blest to me, and not that of *Apollos*? Have the Labours of *Apollos* been more blest to my Fellow-Christian, or the plain and familiar Instructions of *Cephas*? Well, I'll never make any Parties in the Church upon this Account; for all the Ministers of the Gospel are appointed for our Edification; and I'll rejoice in them all,

all, and bless God for the Service they do to the Family of *Christ*. If my Portion of spiritual Food be distributed to me by the Hands of *Paul*, 'tis our common Father that conveys the same sacred Food to another, by the Hands of *Cephas* or *Apollos*; and the World shall never hear me say, "*I am of Paul*," in Opposition to *Apollos* or *Peter*;" though I must confess, God has blest his Ministrations most eminently to my Soul.

*7th Use.* Has God given all Things to the Saints by the Covenant of his Grace, surely then *they should return all Things back again to him, in a way of Gratitude, Duty, and Service.* Has he promised to make every thing which we have to do with, concur to promote our best Interest, and our final Happiness? Let us then apply our selves with Zeal and Diligence to make every thing within our Reach subserve his divine Interests, and the Glory of his Kingdom.

Has my gracious God with-held nothing from me, but together with his own Son given me all things, why then should I with-hold any thing from him? Why should I not devote my Heart, my Head, my Hands, my whole Self, and all things that are within my Power, to the Honour of his Name? Does God bestow Life, or Health, or Riches, upon such a worthless Creature as I am? Let *Holiness to the Lord* be written upon them all. And if my Fellow-Creatures are poor, needy, cold, and starving, let me chearfully minister to them of my Substance, which the great Lord of Heaven and Earth has so richly bestowed on me. My God honours me indeed, when he makes me the Dispenser of his Blessings among his Creatures, and especially among his Saints. I lose nothing by this Benevolence, but am rather enriched by this very Distribution. I become *rich in good Works*, and rich in divine Promises: *He that gives to the Poor lendeth to the Lord, and he will repay him.* Alms are as Money laid out to the best Interest, and are a growing Treasure.

But



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But should I hope for no new beneficial Return of all my Kindness to Men, the very Benefits received of God my Father constrain me to this Bounty. Has he given all Things to a poor worthless Creature, and shall I give nothing to the Poor, or to the Unworthy? Shall I not rather imitate the profuse Bounty of my God, who commands *his Sun to shine, and his Rain to descend both on the Evil and the Good.* 'Tis a divine Excellence to love and to distribute as God does.

The Name of *Jesus* my Saviour has yet a further Power to oblige me to use all my earthly Possessions for his Honour. Has *Christ Jesus* purchased this large and fair Inheritance for me with his Blood, has he given me much on Earth, and the Hopes of greater Treasures in Heaven, then I will be my own no longer, but give my whole self up to him, with all my Powers, and Talents, and Possessions! They are thine, blessed Saviour, they are thine for ever. 'Tis the solemn and deliberate Wish of my Heart, that I may never possess or enjoy any thing from which *Christ* has no Revenue of Glory. O that his Grace may enable me to employ *Things present* for this holy Purpose! And when I arrive at the actual Possession of *Things to come*, they shall be improved in an unknown, but a nobler Manner, for the everlasting Glory of my God, my Father, and my Saviour.

THE RECOLLECTION of the Doctrinal Part.

In this Discourse, O my Soul, thou hast not only been called to survey the Riches of thy Inheritance, but thou hast learnt also, in what manner this Inheritance is made over to thee, if thou art a sincere Christian, and a Believer on the Son of God.

Look backward, my Soul, *to eternal Ages, before the World began*, when God marked out the Bounds of this Creation, and the Limits of these Heavens,  
and

and this Earth, he designed them with all their Treasures, for the Service of his holy ones, for the Benefit of his Children, Angels and Men; and thy Name and thy Share was written down amongst them. The great God, in those early Days of his Eternity, has provided a rich Sufficiency for thy present and future Blessedness. O may my Faith take this delightful and distant Retrospect, and rejoice in God's eternal Love!

*God has given all Things into the Hands of his own Son Jesus, whom he hath ordained Lord of all, that he might govern and dispose of all Things for the Good of his People. Christ is risen from the Dead, and hath taken Possession of all the Blessings of Grace and Glory, in the Name of his Saints, that he may make them Possessors in their Season, and according to their Measure: That he may make thee, O my Soul, a rich Possessor of so fair an Inheritance; and that he may keep every Part of it secure for thee, till in Succession of Times and Seasons, both in Earth and in Heaven, thou art fit to receive and enjoy it. If thou art made a Joint-Heir with Christ, thou art Heir of all Things.*

But remember, *'tis a living Faith in Christ that must intitle thee to this rich Inheritance.* 'Tis of infinite Importance then, to search often and Inquire, Am I a Christian indeed? a sincere Convert, a Believer in Jesus? And does my Faith evidence itself in all the Fruits of Repentance, Love, and Holiness? O may I feel my Soul to live daily this divine Life *by the Faith of the Son of God*, that I may maintain an humble Claim to these Treasures of Mercy laid up in the Gospel; Treasures committed to the Hands of Christ to be kept safe for me.

And may the *blessed Spirit instruct me daily to improve all Things to my spiritual and eternal Benefit*, that I may not be like a Fool, *who has a Prize put into his Right-Hand, and knows not how to make use of it!* May I be taught to draw some sacred Advantage, some holy

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holy Delight and Refreshment from the continual new Scenes and Occurrences of Life! May I derive Knowledge, and Love, and heavenly Sweetness from the surprizing Works of God, as the God of Nature, and from the more surprizing Wonders of his Grace! May I learn something divine and holy from all the Transactions of his Providence, and the various Turns and Changes of this present State, till I am prepared and *made meet* for a more fit and ample Possession of the everlasting *Inheritance of the Saints in Light!* Amen.





# SERMON XXXIX.

The right Improvement of Life.

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I COR. iii. 22.

— *Whether Life or Death,* — — *All are yours.*

**I**T is a large and fair Inheritance that belongs to the Children of God. They have no need to divide themselves into little Parties, and to quarrel about their particular Interest in one Minister or another, in one Blessing or another; for *whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, whether Life or Death, all Things are theirs.*

My former Discourses have explained in what Sense Christians *possess all Things*, and that is, *that all Things present or to come, that can any way affect or concern them, shall certainly turn to their Benefit, and subserve their great and final Interest.* I proceed now, more particularly, to enlarge on the Words, which I had chiefly in my Design, *whether Life or Death, all are yours.*

The *first Doctrine* arising from the Words is this, *Life itself, and the Continuance of it to the Saints, is for their Advantage.*

Now to improve this Proposition to practical Purposes, I shall do these Things.

I. I shall



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I. I shall make it appear, under a variety of Instances, that *Life is designed for the Benefit of Christians.*

II. I would amplify and confirm the Doctrine yet further, by discovering *what a Variety of Graces may be exercised on Earth, which can have no Place in Heaven*, and make it appear, that, in some Respects, a Saint below hath Advantage above the Saints that are on high.

III. I shall answer a considerable Objection or two that seems to rise against the Doctrine, while I am treating of it: and at last, some Inferences will be drawn from the whole Discourse.

First let me shew, *Wherein Life appears to be a Benefit to true Believers.*

Life is yours, O Christians, for

I. *This is the time that was given you for your Reconciliation to God, and securing your everlasting Interest.*

All the Elect of God are born into this World sinful and miserable, by their Relation to the first Adam; therefore St. Paul seems to include himself, as well as the Heathen Infidels, when he speaks of the Iniquity of their Nature, and the Guilt of their State. *Eph. ii. 2. We all had our Conversation in times past in the Lusts of our Flesh, fulfilling the Desires of the Flesh and the Mind, and were by Nature the Children of Wrath even as others.* Now this Life is the Time given to seek Deliverance from the Wrath to come, to fly to the Hope that is set before us; Now is the accepted Time, now is the Day of Salvation, 1 Cor. vi. 2. Now while we are in our State of Trial, before the Gates of the Grave have closed upon us, and before the Gates of Hell have been opened to receive us.

We are all, by Nature, Strangers to God, Enemies in our Minds by wicked Works, and under Sentence of Condemnation: Remember, O Sinners, this is the Time to get Acquaintance with God, to return  
to

to his Service, and obtain his special Favour. We are defiled and guilty Creatures: This is the Hour of Cleansing, while the Fountain of the Blood of *Christ* stands open, *to wash us from Sin and Uncleaness*. We are, by Nature, utterly unfit for Heaven, and all the Works and the Joys of it, because of the vicious Inclinations that govern us. This is the Day of Repentance as well as Pardon: This is the Day given us to insure those blessed Mansions on high, and to obtain preparing Graces. This temporal Life is the only Season, wherein the Sentence of our Condemnation can be reversed, and wherein we may obtain eternal Forgiveness, and a Right to Life everlasting. The Blood and Righteousness of the Son of God, are not proposed nor offer'd to guilty Creatures in the other World. Now is the Time to acquire a Meetness for the *Inheritance in Light* through the sanctifying Influences of the blessed Spirit.

After Death there is nothing of this kind to be done, *There is no Work, nor Device, no Knowledge, nor Wisdom*, no Faith or Repentance to be exercised, no such Duty to be performed among the Dead, no Opportunity to rectify the Mistakes of Life: There is no Grace to be obtained for Sinners *in the Grave, whither we are all travelling*, Eccles. ix. 10. What is left undone at that awful Moment, must be for ever undone. At the Voice of the Summons we must go, whether pardon'd or unpardon'd, whether holy or unholy, whether hoping or despairing. And a dreadful Spectacle it is as your Eyes ever beheld, to see a Sinner expiring in full and raging Despair.

But O what infinite Advantage has it been to Christians, that they have enjoy'd this golden Hour of Grace, and been taught to improve it well? What had been come of you, O Believers, if ye had been arrested some Years ago by the Messenger of Death, and hurried away into Eternity? Where had your Portion been, if ye had been sent down to the  
Grave

Grave in the midst of your Sins, before you were awakened or convinced of your Folly and Danger, before you had felt inward Repentance, or had been acquainted with *Jesus* that bought and bestows Forgiveness; before ye had known the Vertue of his reconciling Blood, or seen the Face of a God reconciled? While your Hearts and Life were all unclean and unholy, your Death must have been dreadful, and your Soul for ever unhappy. What infinite Honours are due to the Patience and Long-suffering of your God, and to the Mercy and Mediation of *Jesus* your Saviour? Glory be to divine Patience, and divine Grace, for Life prolonged and a Sinner saved!

II. *Life is yours; 'Tis your Opportunity of doing much Service for Christ, and manifesting your Gratitude for his redeeming Love, 2 Cor. v. 15. They who live should not henceforth live to themselves, but to him that died for them, and rose again.*

Here on Earth, you may speak of the Wonders of his Grace that has saved you, and publish his Love that is unspeakable: You may tell Sinners of the infinite Dimensions of this Love, to invite them to partake of the same Salvation. Here your Lips and your Tongues may be delightfully employ'd, in declaring what you have tasted of the Blessings of the Gospel, and the Grace of *Christ*; and call othersto *taste and see that the Lord is good, and how Blessed the Man is that trusteth in him, Psal. xxxiv. 8.* Here you may make it known, for the Support of poor convinced Wretches that are ready to despair, what *Heights* and what *Lengths*, what *Breadths* and what *Depths* there are in the *Love of Christ*; for it reach'd your Soul even at the Borders of Hell, it spread wide to cover all your great and heinous Iniquities; it rises high, for it has lifted your Hopes to Heaven; and it stretches its sweet and sovereign Influence beyond the Length of Time, and provides  
for



for your Life and Happiness that shall measure our Eternity. Here you may proclaim the Praises of your Redeemer to an ignorant World, you may promote his Interest a hundred Ways on Earth, and thus glorify your Saviour which is in Heaven.

This is not to be done in the same Manner, nor for the same blessed Purposes amongst the Saints above. When the Body lies senseless and mouldring in the Grave, the Tongue cannot praise the Lord; *The Living, the Living, they praise thee as we do this Day; as Hezekiah did when he was recover'd from Sicknefs, and had a Sense of pardon'd Sin. Isa. xxxviii. 17, 18. In love to my Soul, thou hast delivered it from the Pit of Corruption, for thou hast cast all my Sins behind thy Back. The Grave cannot praise thee, the Dead cannot celebrate thee; they that go down to the Pit cannot hope for thy Truth.* This is the proper Work of the living Saint, to make known to Sinners the Grace of Salvation.

Life is the only Time of such Work and Service. " Opportunity (saith a Writer on this Subject) is " like a golden Instrument to dig for heavenly Trea- " sure: Do not wear it out, as many have done, in " digging for Pebbles, and at your latter End be- " come a Fool. Plead not your mean Capacity: " *Kings of the Earth, and all People, old Men and " Children, may praise the Lord, Psal. cxlviii. 11, 12.* " Serve your Age according to your Talent, *Matt. " xxv. 15.* He that had but one Talent, but a single " Capacity, was called to Account for it, and *cast " into outer Darknefs.* Think how many Opportuni- " ties you have out-lived, which will never have " their Resurrection: Redeem lost Time, by im- " proving what remains. Project Improvements of " Life, since your Light is near extinguished. " Make up in Affection what may be wanting in " Action. If you cannot do much, yet love much. " If our Servants should work no better for us than " many have done for God, we should turn them

" cut



“ out of Doors. Stir up others to work for God,  
 “ that you may do by their Hand what you cannot  
 “ do by your own.” Thus this pious Author.

Let us consider what glorious Services have been done for God, by the long Continuance of Saints in this World. Survey the Labours and the Sufferings, the Ministry, the Zeal and the Success of the blessed Apostles, who planted the first Christian Churches. What Monuments of Honour did they raise among *Jews* and Strangers, among *Greeks* and *Barbarians*, the savage and the polite *Heathens*, to their crucified and exalted Saviour! What Multitudes of Subjects were brought to bow the Knee to *Jesus* by their Preaching! What a large Harvest of Souls was gather'd unto *Christ*, when the Apostle scatter'd the Seed of the Gospel all round the Countries, from *Jerusalem*, through the Provinces of the lesser *Asia*, and through the *Southern* Parts of *Europe*, (as some have supposed) as far as *Spain*! And the Redeemer was glorified by his Labours, where the Name of the true God the Creator was hardly known before. What an extensive Blessing to the World was the Life of *Paul*? 'Tis to this, that the following Ages of Christianity, as well as the primitive Saints, owe the unspeakable Benefit of his Writings; and 'tis to this, that *Great-Britain* owes the Blessing of his divine Epistles. How honourable was it for St. *Paul* himself, and how happy for us, that he was made an Instrument of such Service to *Christ*, such a glorious Service, as spread itself round the Nations, and reach'd to distant Ages of Mankind. His long Life was an illustrious Blessing both to himself and to the Christian World.

III. *Life is yours, O Christians, for it allows many a proper Season for giving Examples of Holiness to Mankind.* And 'tis an Honour to a Saint, to be made an Example of Religion amongst a Nation of Sinners, or a Pattern of Holiness, among the Churches of

Believers. Herein you become Followers and Imitators of the blessed Lord your Master: He is the first Pattern, he is the most glorious Example; for *in all Things he must have the Pre-eminence.*

If you become a publick and shining Example of Virtue, and Piety, and Goodness, you may attain these four very valuable Ends at once.

1. By this Means you pay great and just Honours to the blessed Gospel whereby you are saved, and confound and silence the impious Accusations and Slanders of the Wicked: And especially if your Station and Rank in the World make you the Object of more publick Notice, either in a City, in a Village, in a Neighbourhood, or in any Society of Men, then, like a Candle or a Torch set on a Hill, you diffuse Light and Honour far around you, and God and the Gospel are glorified on your Account.

And not only in the higher Stations of Life, but even Servants of the lowest Character, if they are but Saints, may adorn the Doctrine of God their Saviour in all Things, Titus ii. 10. 'Tis greatly for the Credit of our holy Religion, when the Men of this World seeing our good Works, are forced to confess that there is something divine in Christianity, that *God is amongst us of a Truth*; and by these Means they are constrained to glorify our Father, and our Redeemer, and our holy Religion. This is the Command of Christ, Matt. v. 16.

2. Hereby Sinners are not only convinced that there is a Power and Glory in the Doctrine of Christ, but many a Soul has been converted to the Faith of Jesus, by beholding the pious Conversation, the heavenly Graces, the holy Love, the divine Zeal, the Constancy, the Patience, and the Sufferings of Christians. The good Women in St. Peter's Days were exhorted to invite and draw their unbelieving Husbands to the Faith and Love of the Gospel, by beholding their chaste Conversation, coupled with religious Fear, and the Ornament of a meek and quiet Spirit, 1 Pet. iii. 1, 2, &c.

Look

Look forward, O Christians, to the last great Day, and think with what a pleasing Joy you shall hear those who have been converted by your Example, and reform'd from a licentious Course of Life, declare this to your publick Honour before Men and Angels: Your holy Example, though bury'd long in silence, shall have a glorious Resurrection in that Day, and the Judge himself shall proclaim it to your Praise, that he us'd your Piety here on Earth, as an Instrument of his Grace to enlarge his Kingdom.

3. Hereby *Christians of a lower Form*, and those that are Babes in *Christ*, are awaken'd to an holy Imitation of your superior Virtues and Graces. 'Twas the Continuance of St. Paul in this Life, thro' the various Stages of it, that recommended him as a Pattern to the Believers of his Day, in all the various Circumstances of their Lives; and the longer he liv'd, the more glorious Example he left behind him, for the Benefit of the Saints, that they might be *Followers of him as he was of Christ*, 1 Cor. xi. 1.

And I may add in the fourth Place, Where a Christian of shining Virtues and of diffusive Goodness is blest with a long Life, *the Memory of his Example, and the sweet savour of his Graces, remain the longer on Earth, after his own Departure to Heaven*. 'Tis like a rich Perfume that has lain some considerable Time among Garments, it communicates a pleasant Fragrancy to the Apparel long after the Perfume itself is removed. Thus many a Saint, by the sweet Odour of his Name, has done Honour to the Gospel in the Place where he liv'd, while his Bones are mouldring in the Dust: The History of his various Virtues, has dwelt long on the Lips of the surviving Neighbours; and, perhaps, hath awakened others to an Imitation of such a Pattern many Years after his Decease.

Whether Example be of any use in Heaven, or whether the Saints of lower Rank there may be excited to holy Imitation, by the superior Graces or

Glories of more eminent Saints, is not so well known to us; but this we may well be assured of, that the Example of Christians can have no Use in that happy World, to Guard the Doctrine of *Christ* from profane Reproaches, or to convince or convert Sinners and Infidels. 'Tis the Living, and the Living alone that can do this Service for *Christ*, and glorify his Gospel in such Instances as these.

But I proceed to another Advantage of our Continuance in this World.

IV. *Life is yours; for it gives Opportunity for abounding in good Works to the great Benefit of Mankind.* The longer a Saint lives, if he maintain his Character with Honour, he becomes so much a greater Blessing to the World. But what a deal of Good ceases with the Life of a good Man!

Christians, ye are required to maintain good Works for the Honour of your Father, and for the Glory of your Saviour, who hath purchased you to be a *peculiar People, zealous of good Works*: But there is another Reason for them too, and that is, *these Things are good and profitable to Men*, Titus ii. 14. compared with the third Chapter, ver. 8. Every Day of Life opens some new Scenes, wherein you may be serviceable to your Neighbours, your Relatives, your Fellow-Creatures, and so make the World the better for you.

The Days and Years of Life should be number'd by the Multitude of good Works, as much as by the Revolutions of the Sun and Moon: For lost and wasted Time should not come into the Account of Life. But if this were our way of Counting, what should we say of Thousands, who have lived to no other Purpose but to eat and drink, and to make up the Number of Mankind? O 'tis a mean and pitiful Thing only to be old in Time, and not in Duties to God, or Benefits to Men. And (as an Author speaks on this Subject) "All the good Works of many  
" who



“ who are stricken in Years will lie in a very little  
 “ Compass: To be an ancient Man or Woman of  
 “ two or three Years old, sounds like a Contradicti-  
 “ on ;” and ’tis, indeed, a Matter of great Shame,  
 and ought to awaken deep Repentance.

How many are there that live to no Purpose at all,  
 and the World will not miss them when they are  
 gone? How many that live to wicked Purpose, and  
 the World is glad to be rid of them? Some are meer  
*Cumberers of the Ground*, and some are *perfect Nu-*  
*sances*, and *publick Mischiefs*. Such should never pre-  
 tend to the Name of Christians. Let us remember  
 it was the Character of our blessed Lord, that *he*  
*went about doing Good*; and he was willing to *work*  
*those Works while it was his Day of Life, for the Night*  
*was coming on* him wherein he should have no such  
 sort of Work to do, *John ix. 4.* O may our Saviour  
 be our Pattern, and let us be Followers of the holy  
*Jesus!* Alas! what a noble Pattern! what slow and  
 distant Followers!

It was this Desire of Service to the World, that  
 put the great Apostle *into a Strait betwixt two*, as in  
*Phil. i. 23.* He knew not what to ask for; “ Shall  
 “ I pray for Death and Glory, my Heart hath a  
 “ Wish that way? *It is far better for me to depart,*  
 “ *and to be with Christ:* Or, shall I desire to conti-  
 “ nue in Life? *This is for the Service of your Faith,*  
 “ *and Furtherance of your Joy;* therefore I am con-  
 “ tent, saith he, to have my Crown and Glory de-  
 “ ferred, that my longer Life may be your Advan-  
 “ tage. O what an illustrious Spirit of Zeal and  
 “ Love reign’d in the Heart of this Apostle!

*Ye are the Light of the World*, saith *Christ* to his  
 Disciples, *Mat. v. 13, 14.* What a dark Dungeon  
 would this World be, if it had never a Saint in it?  
*Ye are the Salt of the Earth;* What Corruption of  
 Manners would overspread the Face of the Earth!  
 What vile Communications, and odious Practices  
 would defile the World in a few Years, if every

Christian were dead! What shameful and abominable Works had over-run the *Heathen Nations*, before *Christ* and his Gospel appear'd, and the Idolaters were made Christians!

A Saint in a Family, is like the *Ark of God in the House of Obededom*. 2 Sam. vi. 12. *For the Lord blessed the House of Obededom, and all that pertained to him, because of the Ark of God.* A pious Soul is a *Joseph* in the Family of *Potiphar*, Gen. xxxix. 5. *When the Lord blessed the Egyptian's House for Joseph's Sake, and the Blessing of the Lord was upon all that he had in the House and in the Field.*

A Number of Saints in a City, or a Nation, are many times like *Noah*, *Daniel*, and *Job*, in the midst of them. They guard the Publick by their Prayers from mighty Ruin and wide Desolation. *Sodom* it self had been saved, *if there had been ten righteous Souls in it.* And I am persuaded, *Great-Britain* had been a Kingdom of Idolaters and Slavery, or a Heap of Confusion and Slaughter, and a Field of Blood long ago, because of the provoking Wickedness in the midst of it, had it not been for the few Righteous that have always stood in the Gap: There have been always some powerful Pleaders at the Mercy-Seat, when the Wrath of God and the destroying Angels have been breaking in like a Flood upon us, some *Moses* and *Samuel* to with-hold the Desolation, when Popery and Tyranny have been just at our Gates, and ready to overwhelm us.

O how many unknown Blessings do these sinful Nations enjoy, because of the Lives and the Prayers of the Saints that are in it! Holy Souls, who though they are divided into different Parties, and practise their different Forms, yet worship the same God, through the same Mediator, and by the same Spirit, who are ever welcome to the Throne of Grace, who are all *Saints* in the Esteem of God, and in the Language of Scripture. Strange, that the Name of a *Saint* should be us'd as a Term of Reproach amongst  
us,

us, and cast upon one Party in a way of Scorn, when these are the Persons of every Party who are the *most Excellent in the Earth*; these are the Guards and Walls of Defence to the Nation, *the Chariots of our Israel, and the Horsemen thereof.*

V. *Life is yours; for it affords Means for brightening your Evidence for Heaven, and improving your own Preparation for Glory.* Surely you are not willing to depart from this World, till you have good Hope of an Interest in a better State, and a comfortable Expectation that it shall be well with you for ever. Does God prolong your Days on Earth? See then, that the Principles of Piety and Goodness be well rooted in your Hearts, and that your Graces grow up under the Influences of Heaven: See that they bud and blossom with fair Flowers to the Honour of your Profession, and to the Joy of your own Consciences. Let the sacred Fruits of your Love and Zeal break out upon all just Occasions: Shine brighter in Holiness every Day of your mortal Life, and bring forth Fruits meet for Life everlasting, that ye may know and be assured that the Seeds of Glory are sown within you, such divine Seeds as will bear a rich and blessed Harvest in the great Day.

*He that has this Hope will purify himself as Christ is pure, 1 John iii. 3. and his encreasing Purity will confirm his Hope.* Believe it Christians, as your Life and Practice grows more divine and undefiled, the Image of *Christ* will appear in you with fairer Evidence, and raise your Hopes of dwelling with him to the Joys of Assurance. Many a Soul has gone to Heaven as in a Chariot of Triumph, after some Years of their Practice of Christianity, who, at their first Profession of it, were oppressed with many Doubts and Fears, and were often trembling upon the Borders of Despair. Life was their Blessing indeed, when it taught them to die with Faith and Honour, and enter into the World of Spirits with divine Joy.

Let it be said then concerning you, O Christians, that you sensibly approach nearer to Heaven every Month of your Continuance upon Earth, and that you look more like the Inhabitants of that upper World, by how much the longer you continue in this lower State; that when you depart hence, you may be assured of a joyful Admission into Paradise. May your Graces shine bright, and your Evidences for Heaven appear so glorious and uncontested, that there may be no Tremblings about your Heart in that solemn and important Hour; no doubtful Flutterings or Frights on a Death-bed, but that you may find the Gates of Glory open before you, that you may see your Way clear through the dark Valley, and have a *rich and abundant Entrance into the Kingdom* of your God on high.

VI. *Life is yours, that by a due Improvement of it your Crown of Glory may be enlarged, and your Seat advanced in Heaven.*

That there are different Degrees of Honour and Joy, conferred on the Saints above, according to their different Characters and Capacities, is a Doctrine that hath so much Countenance and Evidence from Scripture, that we can no longer justly doubt of it: And, I think, I have made this appear by uncontested Proofs in another Place\*. If you are zealous for the Cause of Christ, and active in his Service through all the Stages of Life, and your old Age be crown'd with abundant Fruits of Righteousness, your Reward in Glory shall bear a Proportion to these Labours, and the Length of your Time on Earth shall give a glorious Addition to your Recompenſe in the heavenly World, 1 Cor. xv. 58. *Be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the Work of the Lord; for as much as ye know that your Labour is not in vain in the Lord.* What a Shame and Pity is it, that you

\* Treatise of Death and Heaven, Disc. 2. Sect. 2.



or I should have a long Life on Earth, and but a low Rank or a little Portion of Reward in Heaven!

But to animate your Zeal, I would humbly propose yet a more surprizing Advancement in Glory, to the diligent Improvers of Life and Grace. What if the Services you do for God on Earth should still bring forth new Fruit among Men long after your Death? And what if your Happiness should be ever increasing in this Proportion? When the great Judge comes, he will surely *reward every one according to their Works*: But in *Jer. xvii. 10.* it is said, *God will (not only) give to every Man according to his Ways, but also according to the Fruit of his doings?* What if our Labours, our Prayers, our pious Works and Words, or our Examples on Earth should go on to produce this divine Fruit, even the Conversion of Souls when we were in Heaven? And what if the rich and overflowing Grace of God should reward us on this Account with growing Glories? and *those who turn many to Righteousness* in this manner, *should shine as Stars* with encreasing Lustre?

Some Divines have supposed, that the mischievous Influence of the Works and Lives of the Wicked shall encrease their Torment: And, perhaps, *Jero-boam*, who set up the Calves at *Dan* and *Bethel*, and who made the Land of *Israel* to practise Idolatry for some hundreds of Years after his own Death, might feel yearly more intense Agonies of Conscience, and his Hell grow seven Times hotter. This is a dreadful Thought, and should terribly awaken and impress those Sinners who have diffused their Iniquities far and wide, who have corrupted whole Families, and Cities, and Nations, and spread their Poison through succeeding Ages. And why may not the Joy and Crown of *St. Paul* encrease and brighten by the Conversion of Sinners, through sixteen hundred Years, by the Influence of his holy Writings amongst all the Christian Nations? And thus not  
the

the *Theſſalonians* alone, but the Inhabitants of *Great-Britain* ſhall be the Matter of his *Glory and his Joy*? O 'tis a bleſſed Thing to multiply good Inſtructions, and Counſels, and exemplary Practices of Holineſs, and to hear of them after we are gone to Heaven, either by miniſtring Angels, or by Souls newly arriving there, that they ſtill yield on Earth a further Crop and Harveſt of Honour to *Chriſt*, and Profit to Men. Such Tidings as theſe cannot but raiſe and advance our own Joys.

As your Zeal and Labour in active Service ſhall find a Retribution every way answerable, ſo your Patience under Sufferings ſhall meet with a proportionable Reward. 2 *Cor.* iv. 17. *For our light Afflictions, which are but for a Moment, are working for us a far more exceeding and eternal Weight of Glory.* Life is the only Season, as I ſhall ſhew afterwards, for this ſort of Exerciſe; and the longer we endure Sorrows here honourably, the richer ſhall our Reward be hereafter, tho' the Reward is not of Merit but of free Grace.

How many Saints are there in Heaven exalted to eminent Stations in that upper World, and ſome who wear, perhaps, the Crown of Martyrdom, and enjoy the Prizes of Victory over a thouſand Temptations, after they have run a long Race in Chriſtiani-ty? And yet many of theſe (it may be) would have poſſeſs'd but a low Station, and a little Share of Honour and Happineſs in thoſe heavenly Regions, if they had been cut off from the Earth in their younger Days, and been called away to Heaven immediately after their Conversion. Surely, if you have ſpent many Years in publick Labour for *Chriſt* and zealous Devotion, if you have endured cruel Mockeries, Imprisonments, and ſharp Sorrows, for the ſake of *Chriſt* and his Goſpel, and, through the Courſe of a long Life, have born a conſtant Teſtimony to the Faith of *Jeſus*, there are ſuperiour Glories ſuited to your Cha-

Character in Heaven, which wait your Arrival there.

Thus I have made it appear, in various Instances, that *temporal Life itself, and the Continuance of it, becomes a real Advantage to a true Christian*; which was the first Thing I propos'd.

But here's an *Objection* which may be rais'd against this Doctrine, viz. *Do not some true Christians fall into grievous Sins, when their Life is prolong'd, whereby their Conscience is wounded, their Garments defiled, their Profession blemish'd, and the holy Name of God and Christ blasphem'd? Is long Life therefore any Blessing to Christians, since we are so uncertain how we shall behave, and especially if we behave ill?*

*Ans. 1.* The great and natural Design, and Tendency of our Continuance in Life, is to do more Service for God and Men, and obtain more Blessings for our own Souls; to grow more fit for Heaven, and to raise and enlarge our Crown. If we abuse the Time given us for these blessed Purposes, and indulge to sinful Lusts or Follies, it is highly criminal in us, and we alone must bear the Blame.

*Ans. 2.* Sometimes those very Sins have been so imprest upon the Conscience by the convincing Spirit, as to become a Means to awaken degenerate Christians to greater Watchfulness, greater Tenderness of Conscience, and greater Degrees of Humility, of Spirituality, and Heavenly-Mindedness: Those very Falls have been made an Occasion of their Rise and Growth in Christianity, by the Grace of that God who turns *Darkness into Light*, and a *Curse into a Blessing*.

But where it is not so, God is not to be charged with Injustice, in not raising us to higher Degrees after our Falls; our Negligence and criminal Indulgences of Temptation, have justly forfeited his peculiar Favours: And it must still be confest, 'tis our own Fault where length of Life is not attended with Growth in Grace, and Meetness for superior Glory.

I should

I should now proceed to the *second General Head* proposed, but not having room to finish all my Design at once, I shall conclude this Discourse with these *two Reflections*.

*1st Reflection. What a rich Advantage is put into the Hands of a young Convert!* When a Sinner, in his younger Years of Life is changed into a Saint, what a blessed Privilege is granted him by divine Grace! And what a glorious Opportunity is afforded him, the Improvement whereof may reach to everlasting Ages!

Happy Soul, who art reconciled to God betimes, and a thousand Sins in the following Course of thy Life are hereby prevented! Happy Soul, to whom *Christ* has manifested his Love in the Beginning of Life, and saved thee betimes from eternal Death! According to the Course of Nature, thou hast a Prospect of doing long Service for thy Lord and thy God: Awaken all thy Thoughts; consult, contrive, and seek divine Advice what thou shalt do for his Honour, who hath given thee so early a Salvation. Pray for the Direction of the blessed Spirit, to mark out the Paths of thy Feet, and to employ thy Head, thy Hands, and thy Tongue, in the most honourable Manner for thy God, and the most useful for the Good of Men.

Remember, every Hour of thy Time is a Part of thy Treasure: Let it not be said at last, *it was a Prize put into the Hand of a Fool, that had no Skill nor Heart to use it.* God, even thy God, expects a daily Revenue of Glory, as the just Improvement of this Treasure. Let a holy Zeal be kindled within thee, to do glorious Services for thy Creator and thy Saviour, and to shew thy large Returns of Love to him who hath first loved thee. Let a pious Ambition set all thy Powers at work to do some uncommon Good for Men, and to be made an extensive Blessing to all that are near thee. Arise, and shine long as a fair Example of Holiness in a dark and wicked World, and



and let every Year of Life brighten thy Character on Earth, and enlarge thy Reward in Heaven. Be not content merely to get safe within the Walls of Paradise; The *Thief on the Cross*, who was called at the last Hour of Life, obtained this Privilege; but let thy Ambition rise higher, and reach at some of the more exalted Stations in that Kingdom. Then shall it appear that *Life is thine* in the sweetest Sense, when every Stage and Period of it shall add new Honours to the Name of thy God, give new Blessings to the World, and advance the Joys of thy own Eternity.

*2d Reflection.* If Life be such a Privilege to a Christian, and be a Part of his Treasure in this Sense, then *what a dismal Account bath an old Sinner to give, who bath wasted Life and Time in Folly and Guilt, and no Part of it bath been improved for his eternal Happiness.*

O miserable Creature! Neither Life nor Death is thine. Bethink thy self a little, and review the dismal Scene, "Say to thy Soul, What have I been  
"doing these fifty or sixty Years? I came into Life  
"guilty and unclean, and am now upon the Borders  
"of Death unclean and guilty still. I was born a  
"Child of Wrath, and am a Son or Daughter of  
"Wrath still. I was by Nature an Enemy to God,  
"and I am an Enemy to God still, and have no Interest in his Love. Life was given me that I might  
"seek Reconciliation and Grace; but I have neglected and abused offer'd Grace, and am not yet  
"reconciled to my almighty and offended Maker.  
"The Judge is just at Hand, methinks I hear the  
"Sound of his Chariot Wheels, and a dismal Account have I to give of all my wasted Life. I  
"have done no real Service for God, nor have given  
"an Example of Holiness to Men; but, alas! I have  
"been a Pattern of Iniquity, or at least, I have followed a Multitude to do Evil: Every Year have I  
"heap'd up to myself new Treasures of Wrath in  
"Hell,

“ Hell, instead of securing a Crown in Heaven, and  
“ advancing my Station and my Joy there. Is there  
“ any Hope for me in the poor Remains of Life that  
“ may yet be allotted me? Is the Grace of the Go-  
“ spel sufficient to save such a Wretch as I am?

Yes, O Sinner, it is sufficient, *for Jesus Christ came into the World to save Sinners, even the very chief of them.* There is Grace in the Heart of the *Father* to receive thee: There is sufficient Virtue in the Blood of *Christ* to cleanse away all thy Guilt: There is Influence enough in the *blessed Spirit* to soften thy Heart and renew thy Nature, though thou art an old harden'd Rebel, and a Transgressor from thy very Infancy. Lose not a Moment more, but set about the Work in good earnest; trifle no longer with Grace, thou who art on the Borders of the Grave; fly to the Hope that is set before thee; beg Salvation of God with daily and nightly Tears, and give him no rest till he hath heard thee. Such an Importunity is like to be successful; and then, though thy temporal Life hath been no Benefit to thee hitherto, yet the last Moments of it may possibly be accepted, and prevent thy everlasting Death; God who is rich in Mercy, may bestow on thee some humble Place in Heaven, but thou canst not expect to shine among the brightest Saints. Thou may'st be *blessed among the Dead who die in the Lord, and rest from thy Sorrows and thy Sins*; but thou hast scarce any good *Work to follow thee.* Thy Works, in all thy sprightly Years of thy Life, have been Matter of Guilt and Shame, and 'tis infinite Mercy, that they shall be remember'd no more. But if thy Heart be broken for Sin, and healed by the Blood of Christ, thy humble Repentance, and thy holy Faith in the few remaining Days of old Age, and Death shall be accepted through the abounding Grace of the Gospel. The dying Thief on the Cross forbids thee to despair utterly, though thou hast run a terrible Risque, and venter'd on the Borders of Destruction: And if thou art saved at last,

last, 'tis *so as by Fire*, 'tis like a *Brand pluck'd out of the Burning*, or as a Man escaping naked out of the Flames, and passing on the very Brink of Hell into everlasting Life.

THE RECOLLECTION of the Doctrinal Part.

And is *Life the only Space given me to be reconciled to God*, and am I still a Stranger and an Enemy? Have I wasted away so many Years of this golden Season of Hope, this Day of Mercy, and have I not yet received this Mercy, *nor laid hold on this Hope set before me*? Search, examine, enquire, What is thy State, O my Soul? And if thou art yet a Child of Wrath, and unreconciled to God, make haste and fly for Refuge to the Grace of the Gospel. Cry mightily for Repentance and Forgiveness in the Name and Blood of *Jesus*. Let no more Days of thy Life pass away in such a dangerous and dreadful State, lest Life should come to a speedy Period, and then thou art banish'd from Grace and Hope for ever.

But if the Characters of a sincere Penitent, and an holy Christian be found with thee; If thou art Partaker of the Love of God, through the Grace of *Jesus*, *then bless the Lord, O my Soul, and let all that is within me praise his holy Name*, that he has not cut me off in the Days of my Enmity to God, unsanctified, and unpardoned; that he has lengthen'd out my Life and the Seasons of his Mercy, till he has changed my sinful Nature, and secur'd me in the Covenant of his Grace.

*Is Life given me as an Opportunity of Service to my Lord Jesus*? 'Tis he that has redeem'd me; 'tis he that has laid out his valuable Life for me, what shall I do, O my Saviour, to make some humble Returns of Acknowledgment and Love? O let my useless and unserviceable Years be forgiven, and let the Remains of Life, whether long or short, be all devoted to the Interests and Honours of my Redeemer. Were it possible

possible for the Saints, after they have dwelt some Time in Heaven, to come down and dwell on Earth again, how would they multiply their Labours, and lay out their new Life in more Activity and Service for their God and Saviour? When they have found and tasted what a Heaven of Happiness succeeds the short Labours of Life, how would they double all their Zeal and Diligence, and be griev'd they could do no more? When they have seen and conversed with their beloved Lord, and beheld him Face to Face, with how much warmer Love would they engage in his Service? Surely they would all cry out, that the longest Life on Earth is much too short to shew their Zeal, Affection, and Gratitude to so divine and glorious a Friend. Think of this, O my Soul, and remember, if thou ever arrive safe at Heaven, thou wilt wish thou hadst done more for thy beloved Lord here on Earth.

*Is this mortal Life continued to me that I may spread a Savour of Piety amongst my Fellow-Creatures, and set a religious Example to Men?* Lord suffer me to do nothing that may lead Sinners astray from thee. Pardon all the evil Examples I have ever given, and let my future Conduct shine in Holiness, as a Pattern to those that are round about me. Methinks, I would convince the World that Religion has something excellent and divine in it, and encourage them to the Practice of strict Godliness.

*Is Life prolonged that I may be profitable to Mankind,* and have I lived thus long already to so little Purpose? Though *my Goodness extends not unto thee,* O Lord, yet I entreat that my Fellow-Creatures may be the better for me while I continue amongst them. O may the God of *Abraham* bestow on me that rich Favour which *Abraham* received in those divine Words of Promise, *I will bless thee, and I will make thee a Blessing.* I would fain live useful and beloved, that I may die desired and lamented. What a shameful Thing is it when I go out of the World, that my Ac-



Acquaintance should say, *He is gone, but there is no loss of him.*

*Have my Days been prolonged thus far, that my Hopes of Heaven might be daily encreasing, that my Evidences of Adoption might grow stronger daily, and my Soul be more prepared for Heaven.* Look inward then, O my Soul: Hast thou acquired a more divine and heavenly Temper than in Years past? Art thou wrought up to a greater Meetness for the Inheritance on high? Are thy Desires, thy Appetites, and all thy Powers more fitted for the Business of Heaven, and attempt'd to the Blessedness of the upper World? Art thou growing fitter still for the Sight of God, for Converse with Christ, for the Company of Saints and holy Angels? How are thy Days, and Months, and Years run out to waste, if thou art so much nearer Death, and yet art not so much riper for Heaven?

And is it possible that a length of Life should be so improved, as that my Crown of Glory, and my Portion of Happiness may be enlarged hereafter? Let my holy Ambition awake at such a Hint as this, and let me aspire to a superior Rank among the Blessed, by employing every part of Life to the most noble and excellent Purposes for which Life is granted. Let me ever abound in the Work of the Lord, since I am assured that no part of my Labours shall be in vain in the Lord, or want its proper Recompence. Tho' 'tis the Blood of my Redeemer that has purchased all the Prizes, and Crowns in Heaven; yet if I am a swift Runner in the Christian Race, and the Race itself be long, I am fitted to receive the fairer Prize: And if I am an active and victorious Soldier in the Army of Christ, and have served faithfully thro' a tedious War, I may have reason to hope for a brighter Crown. We may humbly wait for a Reward in Proportion to the Work, according to the Encouragements of the Bible, while we still acknowledge that it is free and sovereign Grace both enables us to hold out working, and bestows the rich Reward. *Amen.*



## SERMON XL.

The Privilege of the Living above the Dead.

1 COR. iii. 22.

—Whether Life or Death,—All are yours.

**W**HEN these Words were explained, this Doctrine was drawn from the first Part of them, viz. *When Life is given or continued to the Saints, 'tis for their Advantage.*

The first Thing proposed in our Meditations of this Truth, was to make it appear, by a Variety of Instances, that Life is designed for the Benefit of Christians.

I proceed now to the Second, viz. *To amplify and confirm this Doctrine yet further, by representing what various Graces may be exercised on Earth, which can have no Place in Heaven; and to discover in what Respects a living Christian may be said to have some Advantage over the Saints that are dead.*

I. The first Grace I shall mention, which belongs only to this Life, is, *Faith of Things unseen, whether present or future*; for in Heaven this sort of Faith is ended and lost; it vanishes into Sight, 1 Cor. v. 17. Here in this World we walk by Faith, and not by Sight; but in the World above, we shall live by Sight, and not

not by Faith. *Blessed are those Souls on Earth who have not seen, and yet have believed.*

Hereby the living Christian doth much Honour to God, and offers him a Revenue of such Glory, as can never be offered to him among all the Saints and Angels on high. To believe that *there is a God* who made all Things, among a World of Atheists that deny him that made them; to carry it toward an unseen God with a solemn Awe of his Majesty, and deep Reverence and Submission to his Will, in the midst of thoughtless Sinners who deride Religion, and live *without God in the World*; to believe that the Bible is the Word of God, notwithstanding all the Difficulties contained in it, and all the bold and subtle Cavils that Infidels have raised against it; to make this Word the Ground of our Religion, the Rule of our Practice, and the Foundation of our Hopes, in the midst of an Age of *Deists* and *Heathens*, that laugh at our Bible and our Belief together: These are noble Instances of a militant Faith in a World of Infidelity. To believe that *Jesus of Nazareth*, who was hanged upon a Tree without *Jerusalem*, and died there, is the only begotten Son of God, the Maker and the Saviour of the World; to believe that he now lives and governs all things at the Right-Hand of his Father, and to trust in him who died upon the Cross to give us a Crown of eternal Life; these are such Exercises of the Grace of Faith, as have no Place in the World of Sight, where every Saint beholds him Face to Face: Such Acts as these, are only suited to our present State of Absence from the Lord, and yet they are highly honourable to God and our Redeemer, *Whom having not seen we love, and in whom, tho' now we see him not, yet believing, we rejoice with Joy unspeakable, 2 Pet. i. 8.*

To believe that there is a Heaven of Glory far above the Clouds, where our Lord *Jesus Christ* has dwelt in his human Nature almost two thousand Years,



and where ten Thousands of his blessed Saints and Angels are for ever enjoying divine Consolations; to maintain a firm Belief that there is a Reward for the Righteous laid up on high, while they are here trodden to the Dust; to believe there is a Hell, an unseen World of Misery and Torture, where damned Spirits are punished for their Rebellion against the great God, and shall for ever suffer the Weight of his Indignation; and to walk through this World with a holy Negligence and Contempt of it under the Influence of these future Invisibles, these eternal Joys and eternal Sorrows: This is a *Faith* that gives much Glory to God, while we live, and speak, and act, while we suffer and *endure*, as *seeing him who is invisible*, and firmly believing all the Joys and Terrors of another World, which are hidden from us by the Veil of Flesh and Blood.

This was the Faith of the ancient Patriarchs, *Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob*; this was the Faith of *Noah and Moses*, and many other Heroes, whose Names shine with Honour in *St. Paul's Epistle to the Hebrews*; and the great and blessed God received daily Honours from this their Faith.

In Heaven all these Invisibles are seen, all these Futurities become present, and they are no longer Matters of Faith. O that this Faith might overspread the Earth, as Sight is found all over Heaven!

II. *Hope and Expectation of future Blessings*, either here or hereafter, *under all present Darknnesses and Discouragements* is another Grace which may be exercised by the living Saints; but among the Saints that are dead, there is no Room nor Place for it; for in Heaven our *Hope* is turned into *Enjoyment*; *Hope that is seen or enjoyed is not Hope, what a Man seeth why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that which we see not, then do we with Patience wait for it, Rom. viii. 24.* And this patient and chearful Expectation

under



under discouraging Difficulties, is a glorious Homage paid to God, such as the Saints in Heaven cannot pay him.

The living Christian knows not what Honour he brings to his God, when his Hope for promised Mercies bears itself up, while there are no appearing Prospects to the Eye of Sense, and in Opposition to a thousand rising Dangers; when he can live upon the naked Promise, and be assured of the full Performance, meerly because his God hath spoken it.

Then we give Honour to God, such as the Souls in Heaven can't give him, when under the renewed Exercise of Faith and Repentance we maintain an humble Hope of the Pardon of Sin through the Promises of his Gospel, even though our Iniquities have been exceeding great, and though Sin is every Day working and striving against our best Purposes, and too often bringing us under fresh Guilt.

Then we glorify our *blessed Redeemer*, so as the Saints in Heaven cannot glorify him, when we feel our Consciences burdened with Sin, and yet maintain Faith and Hope of Acceptance with a great and holy God, through the Death, Righteousness, and Intercession of a Person whom we never saw. This is an illustrious Honour done to the Name, and Sacrifice, and Mediation of the Son of God.

Then we give Glory to the *blessed Spirit* our Enlightener, and our Sanctifier, when in the midst of our own Errors and Darkneses, and in the midst of Difficulties and Cavils raised by Men, we trust in his promised Guidance into all necessary Truth; when we walk on in the midst of Temptations, waiting and hoping for fresh sanctifying Influences, while we feel and groan over the Deceitfulness and the Weakness of our own Hearts, that are too ready to start aside from God like a broken Bow.

Then we honour God and his Gospel indeed, when we hope for our own final Salvation thro' the Blood of the everlasting Covenant, having fled for Refuge to the Hope that is set before us, though by the Wiles of the Devil, we have been under strong Temptations to Despair, and sometimes have seemed to be forsaken of God, as *Christ Jesus* was when hanging on the Cross: 'Twas then that he glorified his Father and his God, by the Constancy and Courage of his Hope, in such a Manner as he was never capable of doing after that great and dreadful Day; and herein his poor tempted Followers have been noble Imitators of their Saviour and their Lord, and have held fast their Confidence in divine Mercy in the midst of sore Temptations, and given great Glory to their God and Father.

Nor is this Hope a vain presuming Confidence, or a bold Fit of Enthusiasm, for it evidences its own heavenly and divine Original, by keeping the Soul pure, and holy, and humble, in the midst of all this Darkness, and this disconsolate State; *He that hath this Hope will purify himself even as Christ is pure,* 1 John iii. 3. A presuming Hope that carries no Spring of Holiness in it, can neither honour God nor profit Men.

But there are other Occasions also in this Life, for the Exercise of the Grace of *Hope*, viz. amidst huge and threatening Difficulties, that relate to the publick Interests of Religion. When the feeble and doubting Christians sees the Affairs of the Church of *Christ* sinking daily, he is almost ready to sink and die too, and to despair for *Zion*; and 'tis the Language of his Unbelief, *By whom shall Jacob arise, for he is small?* But the stronger Christian, who knows how to live upon a Promise, can reply, that the *God of Jacob is Almighty*, the King of *Israel* is the true God and everlasting King, and the Interest of the Church shall rise again, even though it were drowning; for not all the Floods on Earth, nor even the

*Gates*

*Gates of Hell shall prevail against the Church* that is built upon *Jesus the Rock of Ages*; And *Jesus* himself receives his special Tribute of Glory from his Saints on Earth, while they triumph in this Hope.

There are also some Seasons wherein a living Saint honours God in this World, by maintaining his Hope in the midst of various Trials that attend him in his private Affairs, and especially when Poverty and Distress overtake him *like an armed Man*, and he hath no other Help nor Hope left, but in some gracious Words of Promise, and some unknown Appearances of Providences in his Behalf. Blessed are the Poor who can live by Faith!

A Christian honours God also greatly in the Days of Sickness, and the Hour of Death, when he feels Nature sinking, and Flesh dissolving; yet he can look upon his withering Limbs without Dismay, in the Hope of the Resurrection, and speak in the Language of holy *Job*, *Though after my Skin Worms devour this Body, yet in my Flesh shall I see God*, *Job xix. 26.*

I grant that the Saints who are in Heaven, the *Spirits of the Just made perfect* wait also, and hope for the Resurrection of the Body, and all the promised Blessings of that Day; but they have a bright and sure Prospect of it by the Light of Glory, in which they read all the Promises; and they have a Pledge and Pattern of it in the Body of *Jesus Christ* raised from the Dead, and glorified in the midst of them. Their Hope lies under no Darknes, no Discouragement. The Saints on Earth therefore, in the Exercise of this their Hope, give a greater Glory to God than those in Heaven; for it struggles with mighty Difficulties, and overcomes them all. It is such a Hope as *Abraham* built on the meer Promise of God, that he should have a Son when he was an hundred Years old, and his Wife *Sarah* was Ninety. *He hoped in God who quickneth the Dead, and calleth those Things which be not as though they were; who against*



*Hope believed in Hope, that he might become the Father of many Nations, according to that which was spoken; So shall thy Seed be. He staggered not at the Promise of God through Unbelief, but was strong in Faith, giving Glory to God, Rom. iv. 17, &c.*

III. *Liberality and Compassion to the Poor* is another Exercise of Grace, for which this Life only gives Opportunity. The Objects of our Bounty on Earth are both Saints and Sinners; for we are charged to imitate our heavenly Father, *who commands his Sun to rise on the Evil and the Good, and his Rain to fall and refresh the Just and the Unjust, Matt. v. 45.* But in the World to come, the Saints are raised far above the Want of our Compassion, and condemned Sinners in their long everlasting Misery are forbid all Refreshment.

It is in this Life only, that we can shew our Love to *Christ* himself, by *refreshing the Bowels of his Saints.* 'Tis here that we may treasure up Matter for divine Approbation and solemn Applause, in the great Judgment-Day, when the Alms that have been given in a private Corner, *where the Left-hand has not known what the Right-hand did,* shall be publish'd with Honour before that innumerable Assembly. "I remember, (says our blessed Lord) I well  
 "remember, when in yonder World ye fed my  
 "hungry Saints, then ye *fed* and *nourished* me;  
 "when ye *gave Drink to them,* ye gave Drink to me,  
 "and reliev'd my Thirst; when ye bestow'd Gar-  
 "ments on them, it was I that *was naked,* and ye  
 "clothed and covered me; and when ye visited them  
 "in Sicknes or in Prison, I was the Prisoner, I was  
 "sick, and I take it as kindly as though ye had  
 "visited and comforted me." Astonishing Conde-  
 scension of the Son of God! Surprizing Honour  
 put on the liberal Christian! But here is the only  
 Place for acquiring these Honours, though they are  
 publish'd hereafter.

There



There is no poor Christian to be supply'd in Heaven out of the Stores of your Bounty, no naked Saints to be clothed there. All the Regions of Heaven cannot afford any such Object of your Compassion and Love. Many a Saint on Earth is hungry, and thirsty, and naked, and expos'd to sore Hardships and Necessities, but Necessities and Hardships are unknown in Heaven. Many a Widow, and Orphan, and poor destitute Christian, lies sick and groaning, as it were, at the Gates of Glory: Let us seize the Opportunity to feed, to support, and to comfort them; for there is no destitute Creature, no Sick or Poor, no needy Widow or Orphan, within the Gates.

Life is given to some Persons for this very End! Good *Dorcas* was even *raised from the Dead*, and had her Life lengthened out to make more *Coats and Garments for the Poor*. Ministring to the Saints is a delightful Labour, and a Business worth living for. In this World the rich Christian has the Honour of being a *Steward for God* to feed his Children; but in the World above, there are no earthly Treasures to receive such a sort of Consecration as this is, no Alms to be offered up as an acceptable Sacrifice to God the *Father*, or to his Son *Jesus*. See then that ye practise this Virtue as often as Providence gives a proper Occasion, and thus *consecrate your Substance to the Lord of the whole Earth*. Lend a little to the Lord in this Manner, and it shall be paid with large Interest: *He that hath Pity on the Poor lends to the Lord, and he will repay him*, Prov. xix. 17.

Perhaps another Week, or another Day shall divide you from all your earthly Riches; no more of them can be laid out for God: Perhaps Death may send you into the invisible World, and ye shall have no more Objects of your Pity for ever; *whatsoever thy Hand then finds to do, do it with all thy Might. You that are rich in this World, be rich in good Works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate,*  
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*laying up in Store a good Foundation against the Time to come, that ye may lay hold on eternal Life, 1 Tim. vi. 18. And remember that he that sows sparingly shall reap sparingly, but he that soweth bountifully in his Distributions to the Poor for the sake of Christ, shall also reap bountifully of the Riches of Glory in the great Day of Reward, 2 Cor. ix. 6.*

IV. Another Grace which only the Living can exercise, is, *Charity to our Fellow-Creatures under their Mistakes, or Infirmities, and a charitable and loving Frame of Spirit to our Fellow-Christians who differ from us either in Principle or Practice.*

Infirmities and Mistakes belong only to the present State; This Life is the only Time when a Fellow-Saint *can be overtaken in a Fault*, and when we are capable of *restoring such a one in the Spirit of Meekness*. 'Tis here only that the propos'd Motive has any Room or Place; *Consider thy self lest thou also be tempted, Gal. vi. 1.* And though we are bound to maintain an everlasting Aversion to every Sin, yet we should imitate and honour the forgiving Mercy of our God, by speaking Peace and Consolation to a returning Sinner.

Be not too severe in your Censures, you who have been kept from Temptation, but pity others who are fallen, and mourn over their Fall. Do not think or say the worst Things you can of those who have been taken in the Snare of *Satan*, and been betrayed into some grosser Iniquities. When you see them grieved and ashamed of their own Follies, and bowed down under much Heaviness, take Occasion then to speak a softening and a healing Word. Speak for them kindly, and speak to them tenderly. Have *Compassion of them, lest they be swallowed up of over much Sorrow, 2 Cor. ii. 7.* And remember too, O censorious Christian, that thou *art also in the Body*, 'tis rich Grace that has kept thee hitherto, and the same God, who for wise Ends has suffered thy Brother

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ther to Fall, may punish thy Severity and reproachful Language, by with-holding his Grace from thee in the next Hour of Temptation; and then thy own Fall and Guilt shall upbraid thee with inward and bitter Reflections, for thy sharp Censures of thy weak and tempted Brother.

This Life is the only Time wherein we can pity the Infirmities of our Brethren, and *bear their Burdens*. This *Law of Christ* must be fulfilled in this World, for there is no room for it in the next; *wherefore bear ye one another's Burdens, and so fulfil ye the Law of Christ*, Gal. vi. 2.

This World is the only Place where different Opinions and Doctrines are found amongst the Saints: Disagreeing Forms of Devotion, and Sects, and Parties, have no Place on high: None of these Things can interrupt the Worship of the Peace of Heaven. See to it then, that you practise this Grace of Charity here, and love thy Brother, and receive him into thy Heart in holy Fellowship, though he may be *weak in the Faith*, though he may *observe Days and Times*, and may feed upon *Herbs*, and indulge some superstitious Follies, while thou art *strong in Faith*, and well acquainted with the Liberty of the Gospel. Let not little things provoke you to divide Communions on Earth; but by this sort of Charity, and a Catholick Spirit, honour the Saviour and his Church here in this World; for since there are no Parties, nor Sects, nor contrary Sentiments among the Church in Heaven, this Christian Virtue can never find any room for Exercise there. This kind of Charity ends at Death.

V. *Sympathy with Mourners, and Pity and Relief to those that are oppressed with many Sorrows*, is a Virtue that belongs only to the Saints on Earth. There are no sorrowful Christians in Heaven; and the various Methods of Comfort, which we practise toward our suffering Brethren here below, are there-  
fore

fore unpracticable in the upper World. *The God of all Comfort is he who comforteth us in our Tribulations, for this Reason, that we may be able to comfort those that are oppressed with their heavy Afflictions, 2 Cor. i. 4. This is pure Religion and undefiled, to visit the Fatherless and the Widow in their Afflictions, as well as to keep yourselves unspotted from the World, James i. ult. But it is the Religion of the Church on Earth, not the Religion of Heaven.*

Go then, and visit thy Brother in Distress, visit poor Afflicted and suffering Christians: Go mention the Promises of divine Grace that belongs to them in a suffering State, and lead them to rest upon some happy Promise: Go teach them the Benefit of afflictive Circumstances: Let the twelfth Chapter to the *Hebrews* be your Text, and raise many a sweet Inference for the Support of Sufferers. Tell them of the Fruits of Holiness that grow upon the bitter Tree of earthly Sorrows; and that the Wood of the Cross blossoms with Grace and Glory. Put them in mind of the Examples of divine Deliverance, when there has been no outward Prospect of Help and Hope. Lead them to a Meditation of the heavenly State: Point their Thoughts upward: Direct their Faith and their Hope thither: Teach them to look at the Things that are unseen and eternal, that they may be able in the Language of Faith to say, *These light Afflictions which are but for a Moment are working for us an eternal Weight of Glory, 2 Cor. iv. 17, 18.*

There are no Sorrows among the Inhabitants of Heaven, no Sufferings there, no Pain, no Complaint; nor is there any need of your Consolations: This is a Work you cannot do in Paradise, but God delights to see his Children here comfort one another in their Travels thro' this Valley of Tears, this tiresome Wilderness, *1 Thess. iv. 18.* Then let us give our Fellow-Christians their Due of Consolation, and offer to our God the Sacrifice of his Delight.



VI. *Forbearance and Forgiveness of real or supposed Injuries*, is a Grace to be practised only by the living Christian. *Christ Jesus* our Lord demands it, and lays a Bar upon your Hopes of the Forgiveness of God, if ye refuse it to your Fellow-Creatures. *Matt. vi. 14, 15.* And the great Apostle intreats you to practise it. *Put on therefore (as the Elect of God, Holy and Beloved) Bowels of Mercies, Kindness, Humbleness of Mind, Meekness, Long-suffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any Man hath a Quarrel against any: Even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. Col. iii. 12, 13.* *Charity* (or *Love*, as it should be translated) *suffers long, beareth all Things, and hopeth all things; and though consider'd, in the general Notion of Love to the Saints, it lives for ever in Heaven; yet these special Exercises of it belong only to this World. Charity or Love is not easily provoked, it thinketh no Evil, gives every Thing the best turn that it will bear, and puts the best Sense upon all Things that are spoken. O that every living Christian might adorn his Profession with the Exercise of this Virtue!*

*Meekness* is a Grace which has no Place in the upper World, in this respect, that it has no Trials there. Glorify God your Saviour therefore in the Days of your Trial here below, and be ye *meek and lowly* as he was, be ye *slow to Anger*, and swift to forgive, as God your Father is. When you hear a Word of Offence or Reproach spoken, and feel the rising Ferment of the Blood, watch against it, subdue it; this is the Hour of Battle, see that ye come off Conquerors. When there is a Word of Bitterness upon your Tongue, stifle it, and keep silence, subdue the Temptation, and prevent that Sin, give Glory to God in this Manner, which the Saints in Heaven cannot do. *Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give Place unto Wrath: Be not overcome with Evil; but overcome Evil with Good, Rom. xii. 19, 21.*

Love

*Love* is a Virtue that flourishes in Heaven, it grows high, it spreads wide, and it shines bright in the upper World. *Love* is a Grace that out-lives *Faith* and *Hope*, and endures for ever. There is no such Union of Hearts, no such sacred Bonds of Affection as are found among the Saints on high. Heaven is the very Element and Region of *Love*; but 'tis all *Love to God*, *Love to Christ*, and to our *Fellow-Saints*: For *Love to Enemies* is not known in that Country, because there's no Enemy there. To love them that hate us, to bless them that curse us, to pity, and forgive, and pray for those that injure us, these are not only noble Singularities of the Christian Religion, which are not known amongst all the Catalogues of *Heathen Virtues*, but neither are they practised in the *heavenly World*. As glorious and sublime as they are, yet they are never found amongst the *Spirits of the Just made perfect*: Those holy Souls, are all far above the reach of Malice, Hatred, and Enmity; there are no Objects there for them to exercise these divine Virtues upon. *Love to Enemies* therefore dwells only amongst the living Saints: To forgive Injuries, is the Glory that is peculiar to Christians in this mortal State, and our blessed Saviour has a most peculiar Revenue of Honour from it.

But besides the Honour that *Christ* and his Gospel receive from such a kind and Charitable Conduct, there is a Pleasure in this Victory over Resentment, that far exceeds the Pleasure of Revenge, which is the Delight of the Wicked: And 'tis a Pleasure also, which the Saints above cannot partake of; for there are no Offences, no Injuries, no Provocations there: This Life alone is the Time to forgive, and to be forgiven. Now who is there among us, that would not seize the Opportunity of every Injury and Offence to practise a glorious Duty, and enjoy a Pleasure which the Blessed in Heaven cannot taste?

VII. *Self-denial and Mortification of Sin*, belongs also to this Life alone. 'Tis the first Lesson in the School of *Christ*, to deny ourselves daily, if we will be his Disciple, *Luke ix. 23.* but it is the *Lesson of the School* and not of the *Palace*; a Lesson for Earth, and not for Heaven; for in the World above, our Duty is all Delight, and there is no need of contradicting our own Pleasure, or our Interest, in order to please or serve our God, or our Brother. In those holy Regions every Part of our Work is congenial to our sanctified Natures, and with resistless Appetite and Inclination she shall pursue all the Duties that belong to that happy State.

Nor are there any Sins to be mortified there: The Body of Death is buried with the Body of Flesh in the Grave, and Earth is the Place where the Members of it must be put to Death. *Mortify therefore your Members which are upon the Earth, Fornication, Uncleanneſs, inordinate Affection, evil Concupiſcence and Covetouſneſs, which is Idolatry, Col. iii. 5.* Let us be daily engaged in the zealous Practice of this Duty, and ſubdue all the unruly Appetites that make an Aſſault upon our Virtue, that deſile our Conſciences, and diſturb our Peace. Now, now is the Time to ſet ourſelves at work to fight againſt our vicious Inclinations, and our irregular Deſires: Now let us multiply our Victories over Sin and Self. Earth is the Field of Battle with Sin: In Heaven our Deſires ſhall all be pure and holy, there is no ſinful wandring Appetite, no perverſe Affection, no irregular Thought or Wiſh amongſt all the Saints above: There is no Conteſt with indwelling Corruptions, no ſuch Conqueſts are to be gained in all that holy and happy World. There are no new Honours of this kind to be given to *Jeſus*, the Captain of our Salvation, nor any new Triumphs to be obtained over Sin, to the Glory of divine Grace. Come then, let us beſtir ourſelves, and awake to the Battle, let

us bravely resist the Workings of Flesh and Blood, by the Aids of the blessed Spirit, let us *be strong in the Grace that is in Christ Jesus*, and maintain the glorious Warfare, like Soldiers who fight for the Honour of their General, and who hope for a Crown of Immortality.

[If this Sermon be too long, it may be divided here.]

VIII. *Repentance and godly Sorrow for our past Offences*, belong only to this Life. Converting Grace works only on Earth; we are called to Repent in order to be forgiven, *Repent and be converted that your Sins may be blotted out*, Acts iii. 19. And the Exercise of this Grace is not only necessary at first Conversion, (though it most eminently appears at that Season) but it must run like a Thread through the whole Course of this mortal Life, till Death shall put an utter End to Sin. Let every known Sin therefore which we are guilty of, be attended with some new and sensible Exercise of Shame, and Sorrow, and holy Indignation against ourselves. Let us live in a daily, constant, penitent Frame, for we are daily Sinners. This painful Sense of Sin, this holy Mourning, is an Honour done to the Law of our God. 'Tis the Living, the Living who are called to this Work; for *there is no Repentance in the Grave*: Shew your hatred of Sin therefore continually, and your sincere Love to the Law of Holiness, by such a Humiliation as becomes an imperfect Saint.

You will ask me, *Do not Saints in Heaven repent that they ever sinned here on Earth?*

I answer, That whatsoever Regret they feel in the Memory of their past Transgressions, 'tis not attended with such sensible Shame and inward Pain at the Heart as are necessary to that Duty of Repentance that is required here on Earth; for there is nothing must break in upon their perfect Peace or Joy in Heaven. *As God is said not to remember their Iniquities*,  
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because he does not remember them in order to punish, so the Saints above are not said to *repent of Sin*, because they have no such Shame and Grief accompanying it as whilst they dwelt on Earth, and which are some of the most remarkable Ingredients in our Repentance.

But we may suppose there is among them some Sort of *holy Self-displicency*, and something of a *sacred Regret*, that ever they offended such a God, and such a Saviour? There will be surely an inward and hearty Disapprobation of their former sinful Ways whenever they think upon them: And, indeed, without some Reflection on their former Guilt and Misery, they can never give due Glory to *Christ* their Redeemer, who rescued them from their Sorrows and their Sins. But all the painful and shameful Attendants of this Grace of Repentance must be banished from Heaven, because 'tis a State of perfect Joy and Peace.

IX. *Patience and Submission to the Will of God under all manner of painful Providences*, gives Glory to God here on Earth, such as the Saints in Heaven cannot give him.

We are taught indeed to say, *Lord, thy Will be done on Earth, as it is in Heaven*: But it is the *preceptive Will* of God, or the Will of his Commands, which is here signified, not his *providential Will*, whereby he punishes; for there's no Affliction in Heaven, and therefore there's no such Sort of Submission, no Exercise of Patience there: They obey the Will of his Commands in Perfection there, and God himself has no Will that they should suffer, or endure Sorrow.

Shew then, O Believers, your Submission to the Will of God here, as dear and obedient Children, when your heavenly Father sees it needful to chasten you. *Heb. xii. 6, 7, 8, &c. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with Sons; for what Son is he*

*whom the Father chasteneth not? Give him Reverence therefore when he corrects you, and be ye in Subjection to the Father of Spirits and live.* 'Tis only Children under Age that their earthly Fathers scourge and chastise; such are Christians in this World, the Sons of God in their Infant-State; but when the Children are grown up to manly Age, they have no more Chastisement; such are the Saints in Heaven, who are grown to the *Fulness of the Measure of that Stature* which God designs for them in *Christ*. This Life therefore is the only Time when you can honour the Sovereignty and the Wisdom of God your Father, when he sees fit to take his Rod in Hand, and to instruct you in Righteousness.

X. *A sacred Compassion for perishing Sinners, and longing Desire and Labour for the Conversion of Souls,* is a Business that belongs to this Life only. When we are past the Line of Time, and enter'd into Eternity, we can add no new Subjects to the Kingdom of our Lord: This is a Service that can be performed no where but in the present State: 'Tis the *Living*, and they alone that have this Work intrusted with them. When the Lips are closed in the Grave they cannot speak for God, nor exhort Sinners to be saved.

Let *Ministers* call up all their Powers then to the blessed Work of the Gospel. Let them stir up all their Gifts, and employ them all for the Welfare of immortal Souls. What is their Furniture of human Learning? What are their Talents of Oratory, their flowing Language, and the Art of Persuasion? What is their Vivacity of Spirit, their Sweetness of Voice, their penetrating Force of Elocution? What are all these but Weapons of Warfare to fight against the Kingdom of *Satan* among Men, and Instruments to build up the Church of God on Earth? What are they all but consecrated Gifts to win Souls to *Christ* out of the Kingdom of this World? They are  
given

given only for Service in the present Life. Let us use them then with our utmost Skill for these holy Purposes: For, *whether there be Tongues, they shall cease? Whether there be Knowledge and human Learning, that shall vanish away?* These poor imperfect Talents are not made for Heaven. Let our Zeal therefore employ them to the utmost on Earth.

O let us *be instant in Season and out of Season*, and proclaim the Terrors of the Law to awaken the Stupid and Impenitent, to make them fly from the Wrath to come. Let us publish the glad Tidings of the Gospel, and by all the Methods of Compassion and Tenderneſs, let us *beseech* and intreat *Sinners to be reconciled to God*. Let us set the unsearchable Riches of *Christ* before them, the All-sufficiency of his Righteousness, and the Power of his Grace; and study and contrive how we may address their Consciences in the most successful Manner, till we have won their Hearts over to *Christ* and Salvation.

And let this not only be the Labour of the Sanctuary, and the Work of our publick Offices in the Church, but let the Houses where we dwell, and the Families where we visit, be Witnesses for us in the great Day, that we have instructed and warned the Souls of Men, that we have carried on the Business of the Pulpit in the Parlour, and have *spread the Savour of the Knowledge of Christ* through all our Conversations.

Let *Parents* that are solicitous for the eternal Welfare of their Off-spring, and love their Sons and Daughters as their own Souls, let them seize the present Opportunity for this Sort of Work. Let them make use of all the Language of gentle Authority and of constraining Love, to win the Hearts of their Children to God, to persuade them to accept of the Grace of *Christ*, and snatch them as Brands out of the Burning. Let *Friends and dearest Relatives*, let *Masters and Rulers of Families*, lay hold on every just Occasion to speak of the Things of God to those that

are near them. *Life* is the only Time to express our Zeal for God, and Love to Souls, in such a Manner as this. When we pray, *Thy Kingdom come*, we should awaken our Endeavours to gain some new Subjects to *Christ*.

Come, let us all engage our own Consciences in this sacred and compassionate Work, while we consider, that *to Day is the accepted Time, now is the Hour of Salvation*. God may put an End to our own Lives, or the Lives of our Friends to Morrow, and either their Death or ours will prevent this Sort of Work for ever. Then we can speak no more, or they can hear us no more: They will be for ever out of the Reach of our compassionate Desires to save them. We may send our bitter Sighs, and our fruitless Groans, after them, when they are gone down to Darkness without Hope; and we may feel the inward Anguish of a sharp and painful Repentance, while, through our Neglect, and their own Folly and Wickedness, they are cursing the Day of their Birth, and crying out, in full Despair, under the Torture of divine Vengeance.

XI. Another Grace which can be exercised only in this Life, is, *Holy Zeal, and Boldness in the Profession of Christianity, with Courage in suffering for Christ*. These are Virtues that belong only to our mortal State; these are made necessary to the Saints, by the Opposition that is raised against true Religion by the Men of this World. Here in this World, *they that will live Godly in Christ Jesus, must suffer Persecution*, 2 Tim. iii. 12. Our Saviour himself, in the first Publication of his own Gospel, *endured the Contradiction of Sinners against himself*; he sealed his Doctrine with his own Blood, and has given his Followers a glorious Example of a suffering Zeal and holy Fortitude. Imitate him who *endured the Cross, and despised the Shame*.

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This Sort of Virtues doth not belong to the heavenly State; for there is no Opposition made to Truth and Holiness: There are no such Trials of our Zeal and Courage in Heaven, Courage to speak boldly for *Christ*, and Zeal to give him publick Glory, by maintaining his Gospel in the Face of Terror and Death; for there are no Infidels, no Sinners, no Enemies in all the heavenly Regions, There are no threatening Tyrants, no persecuting Powers, no penal Laws in the upper World: No Prisons, no Fires, no Gibbets nor Axes there for the Followers of the Lamb; no cruel Mockings, nor so much as a reproachful Word; but the greater our Zeal is for the Service of God and our Saviour in the heavenly State, the greater shall be our Honour and Applause among the Inhabitants of that Country.

Endure then for a Season, ye Disciples of *Christ*, grow bold in the Profession of his Name, and exult with holy Joy, *that you are counted worthy to suffer Shame for his sake*, Acts v. 41. 'Tis here on Earth only that 'tis in your Power to shew how much you love your Saviour more than your Life, and that your Love to your Lord is *stronger than Death* with all its Terrors. Upon this Account shall I exhort you to practise what the Apostle *James* expresses; *James* i. 2. *Count it all Joy, my Brethren, when ye fall into divers Temptations; for the Proof or Trial of your Faith shall appear honourable and glorious when Christ comes*, 1 Pet. i. 7. 'Twas a frequent and sacred Ambition among the primitive Christians to contend for the Crown of Martyrdom. This World is the only Stage for such bloody Conflicts, and this Life is the only Season wherein we can obtain the Addition of this Ornament to our Crown of Glory.

XII. May I add in the *last Place*, that a *calm and chearful Readiness for a Removal out of this World*, is an Honour done to *Christ* and his Gospel here on Earth,

which belongs not to the heavenly State. *Death*, in the Course of Nature, as well as by the Hands of Violence, hath always something awful and formidable in it. Flesh and Blood shrinks and trembles at the Appearance of a Dissolution, and *Christ* delights to see the Grace that he has wrought in his Saints, gain the Ascendency over Flesh and Blood, and conquer the Terrors of Death and the Grave. He loves to see his Followers maintain a serene Soul, and venture into the invisible World upon the Merit of his Blood, with holy Fortitude and a chearful Faith. 'Tis only the living Christian that can die, and glorify God his Saviour in that great and important Hour. The Saints, who are arrived at Heaven,  *dwell in the Temple of God, and shall go no more out.* They are for ever possessed of *Life and Immortality.* There are no more Deaths or Dangers for them to encounter, no more Terrors to engage their Conflict. Death is *the last Enemy of the Saints*; and when the Christian meets it with sacred Courage, he gives that Honour to the Captain of his Salvation, which the Saints in Glory can never give, and which he himself can never repeat. Dying with Faith and Fortitude is a noble Conclusion of a Life of Zeal and Service. 'Tis the very last Duty on Earth; when that is done, then Heaven begins.

Thus I have made it evident, in many Instances, that there is a rich Variety of Virtues and Graces to be exercised in this Life, which have no Place after Death, and upon this Account the *living Christian may be said to have some Advantage beyond the Dead.*

Here an Objection or two will arise that may require an Answer.

*Object. 1.* But is not Heaven always represented as a State of Perfection? Is not Grace and Holiness more compleat there than ever they have been, or can be in the Time of our mortal Life? And yet, how can it be a State of greater Perfection, if so many Graces are wanting there?

*Answer.*

*Answ.* These Graces which belong to the living Saint, and have no Place among the happy Dead, are but the various Exercises of a sanctified Mind, arising from some Imperfections in our present State. *Faith* is owing to our *want of Sight*: *Hope* is owing to our *want of Enjoyment*: *Patience, Courage, Compassion, Forbearance, Forgiveness, Repentance,* and such like Graces, are owing to the *Sins, the Sorrows, or the Temptations* that are found in this World only. The Follies, the Mistakes, the Infirmities of our selves, or our Fellow-Christians, or the Wickedness of the World wherein we live, are the only Things that give Occasion for the Exercise of such Graces as I have now mention'd; therefore, in a perfect State there is no room for them.

Yet every Saint in Heaven has a sanctified Nature, which is the Root and Spring of all these Graces, and they would appear in glorious Exercise again, if there were any Objects, or Occasions, or Seasons proper to excite them. Therefore the Saints above are not defective in any Virtue or Grace, though they have no actual Exercise of several of them in Heaven. So God himself would not be in himself less merciful if he appeared in any Province of his Dominion, where there was no Creature in Misery, and consequently no proper Object for Mercy. He is a God of infinite Compassion and Forgiveness still, tho' he has no immediate new Exercises of them in Heaven, in a World where no Sinners are, for Sin and Misery are the only proper Occasions of Forgiveness and Mercy. Thus the Saints in Heaven are perfect in Grace and Holiness, even though there are no proper Objects or Occasions for this Holiness or this Grace to manifest itself in such peculiar Instances as I have been describing in this Discourse.

*Object. 2.* How can it be said, that a living Christian has any Advantage above the Dead? Is not Heaven better than Earth? And upon that Account, is not Death often represented to us under most plea-

sing Colours in the Gospel, as 'tis an Escape from the Sins and Sorrows of this present State, and as it conveys us into the World of blessed Spirits, where there are infinite Advantages above any Thing to be enjoy'd in this Life?

*Answ.* Tho' the living Saint has some Advantages which the Dead cannot partake of, yet 'tis very true, that the Honours, the Pleasures, the Joys, the Perfections, and the Advantages of Heaven, when summ'd up together, are far more and greater, and are infinitely preferable to those on Earth; but they are not all of the same kind. When we compare the State of Grace and the State of Glory together, we may boldly say, the State of Glory has vastly the Preference; and St. Paul himself thought so, *Phil. i. 21, 23. To be dissolv'd, and to be with Christ, is far better* than to dwell in this sinful World. He asserts it, that *Death* would be his own *Gain*; yet still he allows there are some Advantages of this Life which Death would deprive him of; for (says he) *for me to live in the Flesh, will be for the Honour of Christ in his Churches; and I shall have this Fruit of my Life, even the Furtherance of your Faith and Joy,* ver. 22, and 25.

When we are encouraging Christians to live above the Fear of Death, we represent to them all the Glories and Felicities of the future World, which are infinitely superior to all Things we can enjoy in this Life. But while we continue here on Earth, under the Difficulties and Hardships of the present State, *we have need of Patience, that when we have done the Will of God, we may receive the Promises,* Heb. x. 36. And we have need of all those peculiar Advantages to be set before us, which can belong to our Stations here on Earth, on purpose to support our Patience, to bear us up under present Burdens, and make us active in present Duties: Altho' it must be still confess, that all those Advantages of this Life, join'd with our present Sins and Sorrows, are much inferior



to the actual Taste and Fruition of the Joys of Heaven, where Sin and Sorrow are known no more.

This Thought very naturally leads me to the *Improvement* and *Conclusion* of my Discourse, which I shall wind up briefly in these four practical Inferences.

Infer. I. Since there are many Virtues and Duties which belong only to this present Life. *Let us lose no Opportunity for the Practice of them, for the next Day or the next Hour may put it for ever out of our Power to practise them.* Eternity is a long Duration indeed, but it will never afford us one Season for visiting the Sick, for feeding the Hungry, or for Charity and Meekness toward those who injure us: Eternity itself will never give us one Opportunity for the pious Labours of Love toward the Conversion of sinful Acquaintance and Relatives. O let us not suffer this precious Lamp of Life to burn in vain, or Weeks, and Days, and Hours to slide away unemploy'd and useless. Let us remember, that while we are here, we work for a long Hereafter; that we think, and speak, and act with Regard to an eternal State, and that in Time we live for Eternity. Let us call up all our Powers to Activity and Diligence, that not a Day of our short Lives may pass away, but what may turn to our Account in the Years of Eternity. While God is pleased to delay our Heaven, let our Continuance on Earth be filled up with the various Exercise of such Graces as are suited to our present Stations. Let this be a new Spring and Motive to our Zeal, that we are doing such Honours to God and our Saviour here on Earth, of which none of the Saints above are capable, and for which this Life is the only Season: And let it appear in the Day of Retribution, that the Length of our Life on Earth, has been a great, and real, and everlasting Advantage to us, by preparing us for a higher Station after Death, and a fairer Inheritance in that World which is everlasting.

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Infer. II. *Though your Hopes of Heaven be never so well grounded, yet be not too impatient of dwelling longer on the Earth: And though your Burdens and Sorrows may be very great in Life, yet be not too hasty and importunate in your Desires of Death.* Support your self under all the Fatigues, Trials, and Difficulties of the present State, with this Consideration, that you are now employ'd in such Service for God, and paying such a Tribute of Honour to him in your suffering Circumstances, as all the Saints in Heaven cannot do. Some of the Children of God in this World have been too impatient of Life, and too eager in their Importunities for Death and the Grave. *Job* and *Elijah* were great Favourites of Heaven, but they fail'd a little in this Point: And God, in the Course of his Providence, afterward made it appear what eminent Service he had for them both to do before they left this World. *Elijah* was design'd to reform the whole Nation of *Israel* from Idolatry; and *Job* to be the Parent of a new large Family, and give the World an Example of God's rewarding Providence. *If Life be yours, O Christian, and be numbred among your Possessions, be not too hasty to part with it, nor to throw away that Talent which may yet, in Days to come, be employ'd to the signal Honour of thy God and Saviour.*

Infer. III. *If Life be almost spent, and you have done little for God, see that in your last, your dying Hours, (if possible) you speak and act for his Glory.* Let not the whole Season of Life quite pass away, and be turn'd over like a blank Leaf which has none of the Praises of God \* written upon it. A Word of Warning from a Death-bed may make a deep and happy

\* It was a Custom in former Days for Merchants in their Books of Accounts to have *Laus Deo*, or *Praise to God*, written in the beginning of every Leaf, and it stood on the Head of the Page in large and fair Letters, to put them always in mind, that in all their human Affairs they should carry on a divine Design for the Glory of God.

Impression on those that hear it, and through divine Grace may save a Soul; and if so, thou shalt hear of it again with Honour and Applause in the great Day. The Thief that was converted upon the Cross, spoke a Word for *Christ* in his last Moments, and it has been blest to rescue many from the Jaws of Despair: That dying Creature had done nothing for God in his Life; a vicious Life, and a wicked Creature! But the Profession of sincere Faith and Repentance which he made at his Death, hath been richly honoured in the Kingdom of Grace; and I am persuaded it has helped many a fearful Christian on toward the Kingdom of Glory.

Infer. IV. *If so many valuable Works are done, and so many Graces are exercised on Earth which have no Place in Heaven, then the Lives of the Saints are worth praying for.* Precious in the Eye of God is the Life of his Saints, and they should be precious in the Eye of Man too. When an active useful Christian, when a pious Magistrate, when a zealous and faithful Minister goes down to the Dust, alas! how much Good ceases from the Earth for ever! The World knows not what it loses by such a Death.

Let not Children be impatient at the length of Life which their holy Parents enjoy: You know not, Children, what Benefit ye may reap from their Example, their Counsels, their earnest Prayers, and secret Wrestlings with God for your Souls: Let us have a Care that we do nothing that may break the Spirits of our pious Friends, or that may hasten the Departure of holy Persons from this lower World, whose Virtues and Graces are of eminent Use among us. Let us rather pray earnestly that God would lengthen out the Days of those who speak and act with a useful Zeal for the Honour of *Christ*, and for the Welfare of the Souls of Men. When Death once has put a period to their Days, all this sort of Service is finished for ever; and we

ourselves may sustain unknown Loss by their speedy Departure out of this World.

#### THE RECOLLECTION.

Is not this a strange Doctrine which I have heard to Day, that a Christian on Earth has many Privileges which can never belong to the Saints in Heaven? Is it not strange Tidings to hear, that there are many Graces to be exercised in this Life, which neither Saints nor Angels can practise in the holy and heavenly World? And yet the Evidence is so strong, and the Truth is so plain and certain, that I see it, and I must believe it. Remember then, O my Soul, thou hast one more Motive to Diligence in all the Duties of Life than ever thou hadst before: And thou hast also one more Support under all thy Sorrows, beyond what thy former Days were ever acquainted with. A delightful Support it is, under Sufferings, and a noble Motive to Duty. Awake, awake, all my active Powers, let every Grace be in exercise, and every Talent be employ'd to bring this Revenue of Honour to my God and my Saviour in this Life, which the Saints above cannot give him, and which, at the Moment of Death, must for ever cease.

Blessed Spirit, lead me to the Practise of the most useful Duties, that my Service may be of a large Extent both to God and Man. Now let me study and contrive wherein I may best promote the Interest of Christ and his Gospel here on Earth. Let me bear the Burdens of Life with a holy Satisfaction: Let me endure the Fatigues of Labour with a sacred Pleasure: Let me resist the Temptations, let me sustain the Sorrows of Life like a good Soldier of *Christ* in the present Field of Battle. Heaven will have other Business for me, and proper Work of its own: That's the Place of Joy and Triumph.

Forgive,



Forgive, O my God, all my Slothfulness in Duty, and my Impatience of Suffering. Let this new and glorious Motive possess my Spirit powerfully, and influence all my future Conduct, that when the Messenger of Death shall tell me, *I must be employ'd in this sort of Work no more*, I may look back from the Borders of Eternity, and rejoice that I have been assisted by divine Grace, to do so much for God on Earth; and when I am call'd away from the present Stage of Action, I may be receiv'd by my great Master at the Gates of Heaven, with a *well done good and faithful Servant, come, enter into the Joy of thy Lord.* Amen.





## SERMON XLI.

Death improv'd to our Advantage.

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1 COR. iii. 22.

—Whether Life or Death,—All are yours.

**T**HE chief thing which the Apostle has in his Eye in these Verses, is to represent the Glory and Grandeur, the Treasures and Possessions that every Believer is a Partaker of, by Virtue of his Interest in *Christ*; and to shew, that *whatsoever Persons or Affairs a Christian has to do with in the natural, the civil, and the religious Life, they shall all turn to his Benefit some way or other.* All the Circumstances that attend him while he continues here in this World, and even his Departure out of it too, shall work for his Good. *Death* is number'd among his Possessions as well as *Life*. *Death* may be terrible to Flesh and Blood, for 'tis a Curse in its original Nature and Design, and Sinners will find and feel the Curse of it; but 'tis transform'd into a Blessing to the Saints by the abounding Grace of the Gospel.

I confess, 'tis a *Christian's own Death* that the holy Writer seems chiefly and most particularly to design and intend here: And this I shall most largely insist upon. But since *Death* in all its Circumstances and

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Attendants, in all the Extent of its Dominion, and with all its Power, is under the sovereign Management of God our heavenly Father; 'tis constrain'd to subserve his kind and gracious Purposes to his own People, in all its Forms and Appearances. And I think, upon this Account, that I shall not transgress the Apostle's great and general Design, if I take the dreadful Name of DEATH in its widest and most formidable extent of Power, and with relation to all its Victories; and shew, how even in this largest Sense it is appointed to subserve the Glory of God, and the Kingdom of *Christ*, and by the Grace of the New Covenant, it is render'd useful and beneficial to every true Christian; on this Account therefore it may be numbred amongst his Possessions.

*Death is yours.*

With this View I shall endeavour to run through these *five general Heads* following, and improve each of them, in a few *Particulars*, to the Benefit of Christians agreeably to the design of my Text.

Death is made useful to a Saint when we consider it. (1.) As reigning over *all Mankind in general*. (2.) As seizing on *impenitent and unpardoned Sinners*. (3.) As taking captive the *Bodies of the Saints*. (4.) As depriving us of our dear *Relations and Kindred*. And, (5.) As bringing our own *Bodies down to the Dust*.

I confess, I was very unwilling to leave the *Death of Christ* out of this Catalogue; for *his Death* is not only the most eminent Blessing to every Christian, but 'tis also the Price that purchased all other Blessings in Time, and in Eternity. 'Tis the Death of Christ that may be called a Christian's richest Treasure, for it procures for him all the Treasures of Grace and Glory. 'Tis the Fruit of his Death, that *all Things are ours*, whether *Paul*, or *Apollos*, or *Cephas*, or *Things present*, or *Things to come*. 'Tis his Death that gives Truth and Virtue to the Words of my Text, and to all the rich and spreading Comments upon it, that Faith can make  
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here on Earth, and that our Souls shall taste and enjoy hereafter in Heaven.

Yet when I consider, that the *Death of Christ* is more directly expressed in many other Scriptures, and does not seem at all to have been the Design of *St. Paul* in this Text; and when I survey what a vast and copious Subject I must enter into, if I recount the Riches of Blessing that are derived from this Spring, I chuse to refer that Subject to another Season.

I proceed therefore, according to the Order I have propos'd, to treat of the various Advantages to be derived from this Proposition, *Death is yours.*

First, *The Death of Mankind in general shall be made profitable to Believers.* The Death of all the Sons and Daughters of *Adam*, shall promote the Improvement of the Children of God, in Knowledge, Grace, and Holiness; for it instructs them in three most useful Lessons.

1. *It gives them a most powerful and sensible Lecture on the Vanity of Man.* A Burying-place fill'd with Tombs, is a lively Book of human Frailty: It repeats the melancholy Lesson in every Leaf. Each little Gravestone becomes a Preacher of *Vanity* to the Living, even in the profound Silence of the Dead. This is the Doctrine of every rising Hillock, this is the universal Theme: And every stately Monument there strikes the Beholder with the same mortifying Truth; though, perhaps, it swells with many pompous Titles and Images of Honour. And this Lesson of Vanity stands written there still in fair and indelible Characters, though the Name of the Dead, and all their Praises be quite worn out. Dust and Ashes, even without an Inscription, and without a Monument, are silent but powerful Teachers.

Alas, what is Man in his best Estate! A poor mortal dying Creature! When we read the Histories of past Ages and foreign Nations, and find that  
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those whole Nations and Ages are all dead, and mingled with the Dust, and even those who once made a great Bustle and Figure in this World are now but an empty Name; we cry out, *What vain Creatures we are!* When we behold our Neighbours and our Acquaintance, on the Right-Hand and on the Left, dropping away all round us; when we see one following another daily down to the Grave of Silence, 'tis a very natural and just Reflection; *Alas, how frail is Man!* When we behold the Young, the Healthy, the Fair, and the Strong, the Rich, and the Powerful, together with the Poor, the Feeble, and the Slave, all yielding to the common Law of Death, and turning into Earth and Rotteness, we have just Occasion to cry out, What a vain empty Thing is human Nature, even the best of it! A Piece of pretty mouldring Clay: These Bodies of ours are fine and curious Engines, but made of the Dust, and to Dust they return again.

This is the common State, Situation, and View of Things in all Seasons, and in every Generation. But when we fix our Thoughts on some special Seasons or Causes of Mortality, when we think of a *Famine* or a *Pestilence* that sweeps away Thousands in a few Days, that empties the whole Streets in a Night or two, and lays Towns or Cities desolate; when we read of *Wars* and *Battles* that overspread the Mountains with Slaughter, and cover vast Plains with human Carcasses; when we hear of *Storms at Sea* that drown many Hundreds at once, and perhaps some Thousands sink down to Death in their floating Habitations, then we are more feelingly penetrated with a Sense of our Vanity, then we sigh and groan aloud, and break out into this mournful Language; *O Lord! hast thou made all Mankind in vain?* How awful is thy Government! How terrible are thy Judgments, thou almighty Sovereign of Life and Death!

The antient Saints have made such Remarks often, and mixed these Scenes of Mortality with their pious Thoughts, and turned them into Devotion: They have drawn many serious and pathetick Inferences from such Meditations on Death, and vented their Musings of Thought in holy Language.

(1.) "*Shall Man compare himself with God? Mortal Man that dwells in Houses of Clay, whose Foundation is in the Dust, and who is crushed before the Moth! Shall he set himself to contend with the eternal God his Maker?* Job iv. 17, 18, 19.

Again, (2.) "*What little Reason have we to be proud and boastful! Poor dying Mushrooms, who start up for a few Hours, but cannot assure ourselves of To-morrow! To Day we swell and look big among Men, to Morrow we are a Feast for Worms. Our Days are as an Hand's Breadth; verily every Man at his best Estate is altogether Vanity,* Psal. xxxix. 5.

Again, (3.) "*How vain and fruitless a thing is it to put our Trust in Princes, or in the Son of Man, in whom there is no Help? His Breath goeth forth, he returns to his Earth, in that very Day his Thoughts perish,* Psal. cxlvi. 3, 4. Man is too weak a thing to encourage or support our Confidence.

And (4.) What a necessary Duty is it then to fix our constant Dependance upon God, even in all the common Affairs of Life! *Let us not say therefore, that to Day or to Morrow we will go into such a City, and continue there a Year, and buy and sell and get Gain; whereas ye know not what will be on the Morrow: For what is your Life? It is even a Vapour, that appeareth for a little Time, and then vanishes away; for that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live to do this or that,* James iv. 13, 14, 15." And 'tis the same Inference that holy David makes more than once upon a Survey of the

the Mortality of Man, in the *Psalms* just before cited, *Lord, what wait I for? My Hope is in thee: Happy is he that bath the God of Jacob for his Help, whose Hope is in the Lord his God, who keepeth Truth for ever, Psal. xxxix. and cxlvi.* The Lord is an everlasting Friend, he lives when Creatures die, and fulfils his Word of Truth, when the Words of Princes perish with their Breath.

2. The Death of Mankind in general *shews us the dreadful Evil and Desert of Sin.* It discovers to us the *awful Holiness and terrible Majesty of God*; and it teaches us *what a sublime Value he puts upon his own Law*, and how fearfully he avenges the Violation of it. I join these three things together, because they stand so nearly connected in the divine Oeconomy.

(1.) The universal Death of Mankind shews us, *what a dreadful and heinous Evil there is in Sin*, and, *what wide Destruction it has deserved*, Rom. v. 12. *By one Man Sin entered into the World, and Death by Sin, and so Death past upon all Men, for that all have sinned; for the Wages of Sin is Death*, Rom. vi. 23. Man was made innocent, and while he continued obedient, he was immortal: Transgression and Death came in together: A formidable Pair! Two dreadful Names, big with Mischief and Ruin to human Nature!

When we see the dying Agonies of poor Mankind, our Fellow-Creatures, our Brethren in Flesh and Blood, let us remember the Sin of our common Father, that first subjected him and all his Posterity to Death; and let us reflect upon the dreadful Evil that is contained in the Nature of every Sin; for it deserves Death at the Hand of God. Alas, how often has the best of us deserv'd to die, for our Transgressions have been multiply'd without Number.

(2.) The Death of all Mankind makes a *solemn Discovery to us of the terrible Majesty of God*, and the Justice that attends his Government. He will not

pass by the Guilt of his rebellious Creatures, without a due Repentment of their Crimes. And even though he pardons the Sins of his own People, so as to secure them from eternal Vengeance, yet they must pass through Death, that they may learn what an evil and bitter Thing it is to have offended against their Maker and their God.

When we see a Church-yard fill'd with little Hills of Mortality, the Ruins of a Parish, or a spacious Town, and the Dust of many Generations, we naturally cry out, as in *Deut. xxix. 24.* *Wherefore hath the Lord done thus unto this Land, and what meaneth the Heat of all this great Anger?* The next Verse will give you an Answer to it; yea, every Man may answer himself, *Because they have forsaken the Lord their God; they have forsaken his Covenant of Life, and sinned against him.* Those dreadful Words, *In the Day thou eatest thou shalt die,* have been putting into Execution almost six thousand Years, and the *Lord's Anger is not yet turned away, but his Hand is stretched out still;* the Vengeance of the Lord is not yet fully executed according to the just Demerit of Sin. Though Saints are saved from the dismal Consequences of Death, yet God would not rescue them from dying, that they might always remember what Sin deserved.

Thus the Death of all Mankind discovers to us the awful Majesty of God our Maker, who will not be affronted by his Creatures, without terrible Repentment; he is a holy and a jealous God.

(3.) It teaches us the high Value that God has for his own Law, that he will rather dash a whole Creation to pieces, than suffer his holy Law to be insulted and broken, without some Reparation of the Honour of it. The Race of *Adam* is doomed to Death, for the sake of Sin against this Law, and Mortality and a Curse spread over this lower World.

Let us inure our Thoughts to such Reflections as these, that we may ever keep our Souls in awe of  
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the Majesty of God, and dread the Thoughts of breaking his Law, which he values above a whole World of Men.

O that Sin may become the most hateful Object in our Eyes; 'tis this that has laid Cities desolate, and fills the Graves; 'tis this that has corrupted and destroy'd our Natures; it has turn'd Millions of strong and well-form'd Bodies into Dust: It has ruin'd the most beautiful Part of God's lower Creation, and is sending Thousands daily to the Pit of Corruption and noisome Darkeness. 'Tis Sin has fill'd our Nature with Diseases, and sown the poisonous Seeds of Mortality and Death in every Son and Daughter of *Adam*. A malignant and fatal Poison, that has destroy'd all the Nations upon Earth, and buried them under Ground, Heaps upon Heaps, in above an hundred Successions!

But I now go on to another distinct Lesson, that the *Death of all Mankind* teaches us.

3. It informs us, in a very sensible and affecting Manner, *that we ourselves must shortly die, and awakens the Soul to actual Preparation for its Departure*, Heb. ix. 27. *It is appointed for all Men once to die, and after Death the Judgment.* *Joshua and David, Saints and Kings, tell us, they go the Way of all the Earth: The Grave is the House appointed for all the Living*, Job xxx. 23. When we behold one after another, made of the same Flesh and Blood as we are, going down to the Dust in a long continual Succession, we have a solemn Warning, that we must shortly follow: There is no Ransom in this Case, no Hope of Safety, no Door of Escape, and as *Solomon* expresses it, *There is no Discharge in this War*, Eccles. viii. 8.

A true Christian takes Notice of this with a pious Awe upon his Spirit; and when he is ready to grow drowsy and secure, the Sight of a Funeral, or a Grave, shall rouse him out of his sleepy Temper, and awaken Religion into Life again: When he hears of a Neighbours Death, he asks his own Soul, *Art*

*thou ready? for the next Summons may come to call thee away into the World of Spirits, to stand before God the Judge of all.*

Thus a Child of God reaps some Advantage by the spreading Empire of Death over all Mankind; he makes a sacred Improvement of the terrible Waste that the King of Terrors has made over all the Earth: He learns the Vanity and Emptiness of Man in his best Estate: He grows humble and dependant on the eternal God: He reads the dreadful Evil of Sin on every Tombstone: The Death of every Man calls him aloud to prepare for his own, and to be in actual Readiness for his Entrance into the invisible World. Happy Souls, who take this Warning, and stand ever prepared!

But I proceed to the next General Head which I propos'd;

*Secondly*, As the Death of Mankind in general, gives these divine Lessons to a Saint, so the *Death of impenitent Sinners*, which hath something in it very terrible, *may be turned to the Advantage and Profit of Believers*, these three or four Ways.

1. If we are true Christians, and persecuted and injured here on Earth, then the *Death of the Wicked delivers us from our Enemies*, and releases us from the Wrath of our Oppressors. In the Grave *the Wicked cease from troubling*, as well as *the Weary are at rest*, Job iii. 17.

Look back to the Distance of Three Thousand Years, and see the Children of *Israel* on the Banks of the *Red-Sea*, rejoicing in the Lord their Deliverer, when an Army of *Egyptian* Carcasses floated on the Waters, or were cast up in Heaps upon the Shore: These were the cruel Oppressors of the People of God: They were drowned in the Evening, and the Morning Light discover'd the Havock that Death had made, and the Salvation it wrought for *Israel*, in the 14th and 15th of *Exodus*.

See

See the whole City of *Jerusalem*, and *Hezekiah* at the Head of them, triumphing in the Lord, when he sent the Angel of Death, and destroy'd the Be-siegers: *Abundred and fourscore and five thousand Assyrians* lay dead on the Border of the City, *Isa. xxxvii. 36.* By terrible Things in Righteousness God answered the Prayer of his Saints.

And at the Death of *Herod*, the Father and Mother of our blessed Lord were glad, for they returned from their Flight; they came from the Land of *Egypt*, and dwelt in their own Land again; and the Child *Jesus* was saved from the murderous Designs of that cruel Man, *Matt. ii. 19.*

Such Examples of Advantage which the Saints receive from the Death of the Men of Violence, their impious and bloody Enemies, are frequent in sacred History: And we may remark in our Day, how many a Time God hath saved us in *Great-Britain*, when we have been on the Borders of Destruction, by the Death of Persecutors at Home and Abroad. The Monarchs of the Earth have been turned down to their Graves one Year after another, and the Churches of God, in many Nations, have found Rest and Deliverance.

2. The Death of impenitent Sinners has been many a Time, *the happy Occasion of the Conversion of a Saint.* There is many a holy Soul, now in Heaven, that was first awaken'd to fly from the Wrath to come, by the Death of some of his wicked Companions in his younger Years. When a Snare falls suddenly, and seizes a little Bird or two of the Flock, the rest take Wing toward Heaven, and fly for Safety. And happy are those Souls, who take the terrible Warning, who fly to the sacred Refuge, and lay hold on offer'd Grace.

When a vile Wretch is seiz'd in the midst of his Companions, and his Sins, and sent down to Hell and Destruction in a Moment, the very Gates of Hell seem to open before our Faces, to receive the

Rebels; such a Spectacle fills the Hearts of those that are near him, with Amazement and Terror, and hath often been the first Means of sending them to the Throne of Grace; and, by Degrees, to the Gates of Heaven. The Story of *Peter Valdo* is famous on this Occasion, who was a rich Merchant of *Lions* in *France*, but had no Sense of inward Religion, or true Piety. When, in the midst of Feasting and Merriment, he saw one of his Companions struck with sudden Death, he was awaken'd to serious Thoughts of Eternity: Upon this he apply'd himself to study the Scripture, and discover the Errors of the *Roman Church*; he acquainted his Friends with them, and instructed the Poor, who were continual Partakers of his Bounty. Then being excommunicated by the *Popish* Clergy, he retir'd, with some of his Disciples, to the Vallies of *Piedmont*, where he found some Christians of an ancient and primitive Stamp, and joining with them, establish'd those Churches which are called the *Vaudois*, and are famous in History, even to this Day.

Bishop *Burnet* also tells us, in the Life of the Lord Chief Justice *Hale*, that in his younger Years he gave himself up to much Frolick and Vanity, till one of his loose Companions fell down on a sudden, and they thought him dead: Which surprizing Providence sent Mr. *Hale* to his Knees, to pray earnestly for the Recovery of his Companion, and laid a Foundation for that Life of eminent Virtue and Religion, which is described in those *Memoirs*. Thus not only the Death of profligate Sinners, but even the Appearance of their Death, has been blest to gracious Purposes, for the Conversion and Salvation of others.

3. The Death of the Wicked gives the Children of God glorious Matter for Praise to his distinguishing Grace. When they see or hear of a harden'd and impenitent Sinner, cut off in his Guilt and Obstinacy, and in the Pursuit of his Lusts, the holy Soul cries out



out with Thankfulness and Zeal, *Glory be to that Grace who has made the Difference betwixt him and me!*

And this is still more remarkable, when a Sinner dies with all the Terrors of God upon him, when the Sting of Death enters into his Heart, and sharpens all his last Agonies, when Conscience is awaken'd with all its Horrors, and the Soul is plunging with its Eyes open into a Gulf of everlasting Misery. O how sensibly does this affect the Heart of a true Christian! He stands and wonders, and adores that rich Mercy that has snatch'd him as a Brand out of the Burning. "*What am I, says he, by Nature more than another, that God should have called me by his Grace, and given me Repentance unto Life, while this poor Wretch continued obstinate and impenitent?*" We were both Sons of *Adam* the Sinner, alienated from the Life of God, and Enemies to all that is holy: We were both favour'd with the Means of Grace, and sat under the Ministrations of the same Gospel. Who, or what am I better than my Neighbour, that God should powerfully incline my Heart to accept the offer'd Salvation? "*That he should have prepared me as a Vessel of Mercy, to be fill'd with Glory, while my old Companion has now made himself a compleat Vessel of Wrath, and fitted himself for swift Destruction? Rom. ix. 22, 23. By Nature I was a Child of Wrath, as well as he, a Rebel, and a vile Transgressor, without God, without Christ, and without Hope:*" And why was not I seiz'd by divine Justice, in those Days of my Rebellion, and made a Sacrifice to the Indignation of God? What Merit was there in me, that I should be spared, while my Companion suffer'd under speedy Vengeance? Let the Freedom and Riches of Grace be adored for ever: "'Twas rich and sovereign Grace that spared me. And now, through the abounding Mercy of God, I hope I have fled to lay hold on the Refuge set be-  
fore

“ fore me; my Heart is, in some Measure, sancti-  
 “ fied, my Nature renew’d, and my Sins pardoned.  
 “ Blessed be the Lord who hath given me *Hope in*  
 “ *Death, while the Wicked are driven away in their*  
 “ *Wickedness*, driven far away from Hope and Hea-  
 “ ven, *Prov. xiv. 32.*

4. The Death of impenitent Sinners does another Service also for the Saints, in that *it sensibly excites their Pity and their Prayers for the Living*. It awakens the Exercise of pious Charity for the Souls of their Friends, that are yet *in the Gall of Bitterness, and in the Bond of Iniquity*. A true Christian, that has tasted of the Grace of God, can hardly be supposed to see his impenitent Neighbour seized with sudden Death, and sent away to Darkness, but it touches the Springs of holy Tenderneſs within him, and constrains him to speak a Word to others in the same Danger, and to lift up a Cry to God upon their Account for Grace and Salvation. Surely that Christian is not in a right Temper of Mind, who can see or hear of impenitent and guilty Souls seiz’d away from his Neighbourhood or his Acquaintance, and plunging into Eternity with Horror and Despair, and yet have no Compassion awaken’d in him, no Bowels of Pity moving for those of his Acquaintance that are involv’d in the same Iniquities, and are yet in the Land of the Living, and on this side Hell. Such an awful Providence is like a Warning-word which Heaven puts into our Mouths, that we may echo it with solemn Horror round the Neighbourhood, and try to rouse stupid Sinners from their dangerous and fatal Lethargy.

[*Here is a proper Pause in this Sermon if it be too long to be read at once.*]

But ’tis Time now to leave this General Head, and go on to the next.

*Thirdly,*

*Thirdly, If the Death of harden'd Sinners turns to the Advantage of the Saint, the Death of Fellow-Christians shall certainly work for his Benefit too.*

You will be ready to say, "*What? Can the Loss of good Men from the Earth ever be turned into a Benefit? Can the Death of Saints bring any Advantage to the Survivors?*" Yes, surely, if they die like Christians indeed, in the lively Exercises of Faith and Hope; and this will appear in these four Particulars.

1. *It confirms our Faith in the Gospel of Christ, and supports our holy Profession.* It gives us an Assurance of the Truth and Power of our Religion, above all other Religions in the World, when it enables a poor feeble dying Creature to face Death with Courage, to look beyond the Limits of Life and Time, and venture into an unseen World with holy Joy and Triumph. It gives us a glorious Evidence that the Principles of Christianity are such as will justify all the Labours of a holy Life, and will bear us out in the Profession of it, in the midst of Ridicule and Mockery, of Persecution and Martyrdom. This surely must be a Religion coming down from God, that can give the Weak and the Unlearned such a Courage, as to encounter Death itself without Fear; and that not from a stupid and senseless Temper of Spirit, nor from a brutal Hardiness, such as carries the Horse and the Hero into the Battle, but with a clear and full Discovery of God and his Holiness, of our own Sins and his forgiving Grace, this Religion can enable us to venture into his immediate Presence. How glorious is our Gospel, how divine a Doctrine is this! It has wrought ten Thousand such Wonders by Faith in the Blood of *Christ*, as the great Atonement for Sin, and the only way to the Father.

A Saint leaving this World, and putting off Mortality, with the Light of Heaven breaking in upon his Soul, and the Beams of Glory shining round about him, with divine Joy and Transport in his

Counte-

Countenance, and the Language of Heaven upon his Lips, brings the invisible World into present View; The pious Spectators grow up to a sensible Assurance of the Glories and Felicities of that invisible World; each of them sits on the Borders of Paradise, each of them gets a Glimpse of the *New Jerusalem*, and all the heavenly Country, and this adds new Strength to his Faith and Hope.

2. The glorious Death of our Fellow-Christians, *greatly encourages the Imitation of their holy Life*. To see a Child of God die from amongst Men, leave this World with a holy Contempt and sincere Pleasure, and enter into the Presence of his heavenly Father with a filial Confidence; to see him finish his Race with Joy, and (as it were) lay hold on Salvation, and put on his heavenly Crown: This calls aloud upon us to tread in the same Steps, to pursue the blessed Prize, *and to be Followers of them, who, through Faith and Patience, inherit the Promises*, Heb. vi. 12. When we mark the perfect Man, and behold the Upright, and see that *his End is Peace*, we are animated to walk with God in the same Uprightness, and to press after the same Perfection. *Having such a Cloud of Witnesses that has gone before us, and Christ our Lord at the Head of them, we run with Patience the Race that is set before us*, till we arrive at the promised Glory.

To stand near the Bed of a dying Saint, and observe the sweet Serenity of his Soul under the Agonies of his Flesh, would force Balaam himself to say, *Let me die the Death of the Righteous, and let my last End be like his*. But the Christian goes further, and with holy Zeal, and humble Dependence upon divine Grace, establishes himself in the Ways of Holiness: He resolves that he will live the Life of the Righteous too, and tread in the Paths of Piety with utmost Watchfulness and Care, that he may lay a Foundation for the same peaceful Reflections on his Death-Bed, and the same joyful Prospect.



3. The Death of Fellow-Saints is for our Benefit, *as it weans us from this World, as it makes Earth and this Life less pleasant to us, and Heaven more desirable.* Every holy Soul that leaves the World, carries away so much more Grace and Goodness from it. What would this World be if all the Saints had left it, but a Cage of unclean Birds, a Nest of Serpents, a Wilderness of savage Beasts, a Habitation of Satan, and his Sons and Daughters; a Dwelling of Devils, and a Region of Darkness a-kin to Hell? Did not converting Grace turn Sinners into Saints, and make a constant Succession of Christians, this would be the dismal Character of this World in the Space of one Generation. But, blessed be God, as bad as this World is, divine Grace is still at work, and makes it a sort of Nursery for Heaven by new Conversions.

Yet still the Death of the Saints is the Loss of so much of Heaven out of our sinful World; and the fewer Friends God has here, there will be the fewer Communications between Heaven and Earth. The Absence of *Christ* and his Saints, spreads a sort of dim Shadow over all the fairest Colours of this lower Creation; the Beauties of it fade, and the Flowers of it, in our Esteem, languish and hang their Head, because *Jesus*, and so many of his holy Ones, are departed. When we see one pious Friend after another, taking their Leave of us, and ascending to the upper World, we are ready to say, "*What should we stay here for? Our God is on high, our Saviour is on high, Multitudes of our Friends are departed from us, and dwell on high. Farewel Earth, and Time, and sensible Things: We long to be with our best Friends, and with our God, we are ready, O Jesus, for thy first Summons; take us when thou pleassest into Heaven and Eternity.*"

4. The comfortable Death of a Saint *instructs us how to die, and make Death easy.* When we see and hear a Fellow-Christian examining his Heart, searching

ing his Soul to the Bottom, turning all his secret Thoughts outward, and looking over the past Conduct of his Life; when we behold him reviewing his own Follies and Iniquities, and recalling to mind also all his sacred Transactions with God; when we see him surveying all these most important Concerns in the Light of the last Judgment, and, as it were, under the piercing Rays of the great Tribunal; when we hear him abasing himself to the Dust in the most vilifying Expressions, because of his Sins, and yet rejoicing in the Evidences of his Graces, and repeating the Promises of the Gospel with a pleasant Hope, this teaches us to converse with our own Souls in a more lively Manner, about Sin and Forgiveness, about Death and Eternity; for it brings these awful Themes into open View, and sets them before us in their infinite Importance. This reads us a glorious Lecture upon the Gospel of *Christ*, and pardoning Grace, and the sanctifying Spirit, and the Hope of Glory, beyond what we ever found before in the best of Sermons, and under the warmest Preachers.

Come, my Friends, come into the Chamber of a dying Christian; Come, approach his Pillow, and hear his holy Language; “ *I am going up to Heaven,*  
 “ *and I long to be gone, to be where my Saviour is. Why*  
 “ *are his Chariot-Wheels so long a coming?* Then with  
 “ both Arms stretch’d up to Heaven, *I desire to be*  
 “ *with God. I hope I am a sincere Christian, but the*  
 “ *meanest, and the most unworthy: I know I am a*  
 “ *great Sinner; but did not Christ come to save the Chief*  
 “ *of Sinners? I hope I shall find Acceptance in Christ*  
 “ *Jesus. I have trusted in him, and I have strong Con-*  
 “ *solation. I have been looking into my own Heart,*  
 “ *what are my Evidences for Heaven? Has not the*  
 “ *Scripture said, He that believeth shall not perish,*  
 “ *but shall have everlasting Life; Now, according to*  
 “ *the best Knowledge I have of what Faith is, I do believe*  
 “ *in Christ, and I shall have Life everlasting. Does*  
 “ *not the Scripture say, He that hungrcth and thirst-*  
 “ eth

“eth after Righteousness, shall be satisfied: Surely I  
“hunger and thirst after it, I desire to be holy, I long to  
“be conformable to God, and to be made more like him;  
“shall I not then be satisfied! I love God, I love Christ,  
“I desire to love him more, to be more like him, and to  
“serve him in Heaven without Sin. I have Faith, I  
“have Love, I have Repentance, yet I boast not, for I  
“have nothing of myself, I speak it all to the Honour of  
“the Grace of God, it is all Grace: I say then, I have  
“Faith, and Repentance, and Love; but Faith and  
“Repentance are all nothing without Christ; 'tis he  
“makes all acceptable to the Father, and I trust in him.  
“My Friends, I have built on this Foundation Jesus  
“Christ, he is indeed the only Foundation: Have you  
“not built on the same Foundation too? This is my Hope.  
“Is it not your Hope also? Dear Brother, I shall see you  
“at the Right-Hand of Christ: There I shall see our  
“Friends that are gone a little before: I shall be with  
“them first before you. I thank you, my Friends, for  
“all your Offices of Love; You have pray'd with me,  
“you have refreshed me; I love and honour you now,  
“but I shall meet you in Heaven, I go to my God and  
“your God, to my Saviour and your Saviour\*.

Would one think there could be so much Pleasure in the dying Chamber of a beloved Friend? Surely this makes good the Words of my Text; If we are Christians, *Death is ours*. O this is a divine Entertainment that refreshes our Spirits! And while Sorrow trickles from our Eyes for the Loss of a departing Christian Friend, there's a Sympathy of Joy that works powerfully at the Heart, and the Heaven within us breaks out and shines through our Tears. Then, with a wondrous Mixture of the Painful and the Pleasant, with a sweet Confusion of pious Passions, we bid our dying Brother, *Farewel*.

\* These are some of the dying Words of the Reverend Mr. Samuel Rosewell, when, with some other Friends, I went to visit him two Days before his Death, and which I transcribed as soon as I came Home, by their Assistance.

At such a Season as this, our Thoughts are led upward to Heaven, and forward to the great Resurrection. We open the Eye of Faith, and see the holy Soul ascending to God ; we behold the weak and languishing Body rising glorious out of the Grave, shaking off the Dust, and putting on its Immortality: While our Faith attends the Spirit of our departing Friend to Heaven, we grow willing and desirous to be gone too ; and being brought so near to the Gates of Glory, we would fain take our leave of mortal Things, and accompany the expiring Saint to the joyful World of Spirits.

The Memory of such a Scene, and such an Hour, will dwell upon our Thoughts long, and support our own Hope of Victory, when we shall be called to conflict with the same Enemy. Having such a *Witness* gone before us, we shall not only *run our Race with Patience*, through all the Stages of it, *but finish our Course with Joy*.

There's a sacred Courage derived many Times to a weak Believer, by attending the last Moments of a dying Saint ascending to the upper World. " I was " afraid of Death, says a feeble Christian, till I saw " my Neighbour die: He was once a Sinner as well " as I, and he had his Imperfections and Failings in " this Life, as I have mine ; I humbly hope I have " practised the same Repentance as he has done, I " have trusted in the same Saviour, I have ventur'd " my all-upon the same Gospel, and travelled on " in the same Path ; surely there is Forgiveness for " me too ; surely the Sting of my Death shall be taken away also ; and, through Grace, I shall join " in his Triumph ; O Death, *where is thy Sting ? O " Grave, where is thy Victory ?*

This Observation has been most gloriously exemplified in the *Death of Martyrs*: When the Spectators that have been *Heathens*, or but *almost Christians*, have been strangely animated to profess the Gospel boldly, while they have seen the most amazing  
Courage



Courage of these glorious Sufferers for *Christ*. And those that have been *doubtful and trembling Believers*, whose Faith was wavering, and who were ready to let go their Profession, have ventur'd through Blood, and Torments, and Death, with a divine Resolution, when they have beheld the Martyrs meet the same Death and Torments with a sacred Bravery of Soul.

A multitude of fearful Christians may be animated and encouraged to travel through the dark Valley, and to cross the cold Flood of Death by the Example of a single Saint, who has pass'd that important Hour with Success and Honour. So you have seen a Flock of Sheep stand doubtful and delaying on the Bank of some little Brook; but when the first and second have made their Way through it, the rest venture over in Multitudes, and leap the Ditch with the greatest Ease; the Difficulty and the Danger vanish at once, when they have seen a Fore-runner leading the Way.

Thus it has been made evident in several Instances, that the *Death of Fellow-Christians is ours*. It shall turn to our great Advantage, through the Influences of the Gospel, and the Spirit of Grace, where Christians die like themselves, in the Exercise of a joyful Hope. It confirms our Faith in the Gospel of *Christ*, it encourages our Imitation of their holy Life, it makes Earth and this Life less pleasant to us, and Heaven more desirable; and it instructs us how to die.

But if a Saint go out of this World under much Darkness and Terror, this is commonly to be supposed a divine Chastisement for the criminal Indulgence of some Temptation, or some unwatchful Steps he has taken in the Course of his Life; for God will make his own People know, many times by painful Experience, that it is *an evil and bitter Thing* to backslide and depart from him. A wise and pious Spectator, upon this Occasion, will take Warning by the

Terrors of the Lord, and by the Punishment of his Fellow-Christian, to avoid that Guilt, and those criminal Indulgences which have provoked God to leave his Brother to Darkneſs, even in the Hour of Death : And this may be a Means to awaken him to a moſt watchful Courſe of Holineſs, leſt he fall under the ſame Strokes of Anger from his heavenly Father, and ſuffer his Diſpleaſure in that awful Moment, when he would moſt earneſtly wiſh for the ſweeteſt Senſe of his Love.

Thus I have finiſh'd the *Third General Head*, and ſhew'd, that the *Death of the Saints* may be richly improv'd to the Advantage of the Living.

#### THE RECOLLECTION.

Come, my Soul, who art daily converſing with the Affairs and Concerns of *Life*, come now, and meditate on the Name of *Death*: 'Tis a Name that carries much Terror in it to Nature ; come, and ſee whether thou canſt not derive a Bleſſing from it, by the Inſtructions of the Goſpel, and the Aids of Grace.

Thou haſt heard the Leſſons that the *Death of Mankind in general* ſhould teach thee: Enquire now what thou haſt learnt of them: *Haſt thou ſeen the Vanity of Man as a mortal dying Creature?* 'Tis an eaſy Matter to ſay, *Alas, we muſt all die*: But haſt thou felt the penetrating Force of this Truth? And does it influence thy whole Conduct? Art thou not ſtill, at every Turn, putting thy Confidence in one Creature or another, whoſe Breath is in his Noſtrils, and whoſe Death diſappoints thy Hope? Or haſt thou removed thy Dependence from all Creatures to God, and fix'd thy Hope in him that lives for ever? Obleſſed Effect of the Meditation of Death?

Again, *Haſt thou ſeen the beinous Evil of Sin in the ſpreading Deſolation that Death has made over this lower World?* Remember that it receiv'd its Com-  
miſſion

mission from the Justice of God almost six thousand Years ago, and from his Law which Sin had broken: The dreadful Execution proceeds to this Day, and it will proceed till there be no Sinner upon Earth. Sin is the Spring of all this Havock of the Lives of Men. 'Tis Sin that has deserv'd all these tremendous Executions of Wrath: And yet, O my Soul, how often hast thou indulg'd this Mischief to play about thy Bosom like a harmless Thing? Come view the dismal Effects of it in the Death of Millions, and learn to hate and renounce it for ever. 'Tis no small Evil that could awaken the Indignation of God at this rate, and diffuse it so widely over so large and so glorious a Part of his Creation, as the whole Nature and Race of Man.

Again, I would enquire, Has the *Death of Mankind taught me effectually that I must shortly die*? And have I been excited to make a suitable Provision for this awful and important Hour, since I must not, I cannot escape it?

Not only the Death of Mankind in general, but the *Death of wicked Men* may instruct me in some useful Lessons too. Here I learn how *God rescues his Children from the Rage of Oppressors, when he smites them down to Death*, and lays all their Fury silent in the Dust. Thus Death itself becomes a Deliverer to the Saints, by destroying their cruel Persecutors.

I learn also, that *when early or sudden Death has seiz'd a bold Sinner, 'tis a loud Warning-word to all his Companions*. When I see such terrible Examples in the Course of Providence, let my Soul stand in awe and fear.

And if God has distinguished me by his Mercy, if he has pardon'd my Guilt, and sanctified my corrupt Nature, if he has made me one of his own Children and prepared me for dying, when he summons others away unpardon'd, un sanctified, unprepared, let all my Powers be excited to *bless the Name of the Lord for his saving Love*. I was also a Child of Sin

and Wrath, but Divine Grace has made the Difference. 'Tis Grace that has snatch'd me from the very Brink of the Pit of Hell, and is training me up for Heaven.

And while I adore thy distinguishing Mercy, O my God, to me, *I would pity and pray for poor heedless and regardless Sinners* that are following one another in a dismal Succession, down to the Gates of Death. O may their Eyes and Souls be awaken'd in their Day of Life and Hope, lest Death seize them, and send them farther down to everlasting Darkness and Despair!

But if such Lessons as these may be derived from the *Death of Sinners*, how much more Benefit may be drawn from the *dying Hours of a sincere Christian*, especially if his Heart be strong, and his Faith lively?

Here, *I see the Gospel of Christ in some of its Power and Glory*, when I see a Christian under all the Weaknesses and Languishings of Nature, meeting Death without Terror, and *overcoming* his last Enemy by the *Blood of the Lamb*. I see the Saint all serene and peaceful, even in the Agonies of dying Nature, and amidst the Sorrows of lamenting Friends. He has Heaven in view, and he bids Farewel to Earth with holy Joy: Shall I not imitate the Faith and Holiness of his Life, which laid a Foundation for so peaceful and glorious a Death? Do I not feel my Soul a little more wean'd from the World, since such a pious Friend has left it? Has not Death lost some of its frightful Appearances, since I have actually seen it conquer'd? Do I not feel my Heart panting and breathing toward the Society above, since I have another Friend gone thither? Does it not seem a more easy Thing to me to lay down this Tabernacle, to part with Flesh and Blood, and to venture into those unseen Regions, since I have beheld my Fellow-Christian go before me? He has made the great and solemn Experiment, and surely I should have Cou-  
rage



rage to follow: He has given evident Proof that there is a sacred Power in the Gospel, the Promises and the Grace of Christ, to convey the Soul safe through the dark Shadow of Death, without Surprize and Consternation: And has not my Soul the same rich Encouragements, the same Promises of Grace, and the same Gospel of Hope.

O my Redeemer, and my Lord, hear a humble Suppliant! influence my Soul by thy rich Grace, to keep my Faith awake, my Conscience undefiled, and my Evidences for Heaven ever bright and clear: And when my appointed Hour comes, that solemn and final Hour, *let me die the Death of the Righteous*, and my Departure be like his.

Is *Death* an Enemy to Nature, and does it carry Terror in the Name? Yet since thou hast subdued this Enemy, and taken it Captive, to serve the Purposes of thy Love, since thou hast number'd it, and written it down among the Possessions of thy People; since thou hast taught so many of thy Followers to triumph over it; let me also, blessed *Jesus*, let me be enabled to meet it with holy Fortitude, and a lively Hope. O let me follow the Footsteps of the Flock, into the World of Spirits with a sacred Pleasure, though it be through a dark Passage. And as those who went before me have taught me to dare to die, so let my dying Moments encourage those who come after me, to venture into Death at thy Call, without Terror, and without Reluctance. *Amen.*





## SERMON XLII.

The Death of Kindred improv'd.

I COR. iii. 22.

—Whether Life or Death,—All are yours.

**H**APPY and immortal had *Adam* been, and all his Children, if he had not ventur'd to break the Command of his Creator : *Life* had been theirs in the most glorious Sense of it ; and *Death* had not been known. But when Sin enter'd into the World, *Death* follow'd close behind it, according to that just and solemn Threatning, *In the Day thou eatest thou shalt surely die*. And what a dismal Havock has this Enemy made amongst the Inhabitants of our World ! It has strow'd the Earth with Carcasses, and turn'd Millions of human Bodies into Dust and Corruption. The very Name of *Death* spreads a Terror through all Nature : But as dreadful and formidable as it is in itself, the Grace of *Christ* makes a *Blessing* of it, and sanctifies it to the Advantage of his own People.

In the former Discourse on this Subject, we have learnt some divine Lessons from *Death*, in its widest Extent of Dominion. The *Death* of all Mankind yields some special Advantage to a Saint : He is taught to reap some Benefit from the *Death* of impenitent

tent Sinners, though it carry along with it such a fearful Train of Attendants, and draw after it a long Eternity of Torments. He knows how to derive some Advantage from the *Death of his Fellow-Christians*; and whether they die in the Joy of Faith, and Serenity of Spirit, or whether their Sun sets in a Cloud, and Fears and Doubts attend them in that important Hour, still he is taught to profit by it. In these three Instances it appears that *Death is ours*; Death is in this respect made the *Treasure and Property* of a Christian, as he is instructed to improve it to his own sacred Interest, and to the Welfare of his Soul.

We proceed now to the Fourth General Head, and shall endeavour to shew, how the *Death of our Relations and Kindred in the Flesh* shall turn to our Benefit.

I. *It shews us the Emptiness and Insufficiency of our dearest created Comforts, of all Blessings that are not immortal.*

We have lost, perhaps, an inferior Relation, a Son, a Daughter, a Nephew, a pleasing Entertainment and Comfort of Life: But Death tells us, 'twas a poor dying Comfort, a pretty Piece of brittle Clay, broken and dissolved, and mouldring to the Dust. Our Love and our Grief (it may be) join together, to recal the past Days of Fondness and Delight, short liv'd Delight, and empty vain Fondness, that ends in Tears and long Mourning!

We have lost a superior Relation, or, perhaps, an Equal, a Father, a Wife, a Husband, or a Brother: We have lost a *Guide*, a *Support*, a *Helper*, a *dear affectionate Friend*, entirely loving, and entirely beloved.

He was a *kind and a skilful Guide*, but Death teaches us the Insufficiency of his Guidance, who left us in the Mid-way, and lets us travel through all the remaining Part of this dark Wilderness alone.

He has given us sweet Counsel and Direction in Days past, but he can now direct us no more, we can consult him no more: Those Lips of Advice on which we hung, are clos'd and silent in Death: That Voice will be heard no more: We must walk without this Counsellor all the rest of our Way, be it never so long, and never so dangerous.

He was *our Helper*, and *our Support* under daily Difficulties; but 'twas a *weak Support* that could not stand himself when Death shook him: A *poor Helper*, and a *sorry Defence*, that could not resist the Powers of Disease and Mortality, nor defend himself from the Assaults of Death.

He was a *Friend*, and a *faithful one* too; but 'twas a feeble, a failing Friend, even in the midst of his Love and Faithfulness; for he was call'd away, and constrain'd to depart from us in a dark and sorrowful Minute, and hath left us to mourn alone. He could not abide with us a Moment beyond his Summons; he forsook us while we were drowned in Grief, and could give us no more Consolation. *Our Fathers, where are they? Our Prophets, our Instructors, our Guides, and Helpers are gone down to the Land of Silence, they lie asleep in the Dust and Darkness, Zach. i. 5.*

Thus Death is made of Advantage to us, even when it strikes us in so tender a Part: For it teaches us this sacred Lesson, *how vain and empty are all our Hopes in Creatures!* The Dart of Death is like a Pen of Iron in his Hand, and he writes *Emptiness* and *Vanity* on every Friend, on every Relative that he takes from our Family, from our Side, from our Bosom: He writes it in deep and painful Characters, and holds our Souls to the solemn Lesson. The same Truth stands written in many a Part of the Book of God, in divine and golden Letters; but, perhaps, we would never have learnt it, had not Death copied it out for us in Letters of Blood.



II. The Death of our Kindred *drives us to a more immediate and constant Dependence on God.* When the Stream is cut off, what should we do but run to the Fountain? If the Stars vanish, we seek the Sun-Beams. And O may the Sun arise, and shine upon our Souls with growing Light and Comfort as the Stars disappear!

While our Friends or Kindred were alive, we made them our Refuge in every Distress; we have trusted in them perhaps too much; we have lived too much upon them, with the Neglect of God. A Parent, a Brother, or perhaps a dearer Relative; these were our *high Tower*, our *Defence*, our *Sun*, and our *Shield*: These assum'd that Station in our Hearts, and that high Place in our Esteem which is due to God only. But, when this *Tower* is batter'd down to Dust, when this *Shield* of Clay is broken to Pieces, and this dim and feeble *Sun* turned into Darknes, then we make God alone our *Sun*, our *Shield*, and our *high Tower of Defence*. Then we search out earnestly what kind and Condescending Characters and Relations God has assum'd in his Word; and we read and survey the gracious Titles of our Lord *Jesus Christ*, with new and unknown Delight.

Have any of you lost your earthly Parents? Then you read with Pleasure those Words of the *Psalmist*, *If my Father or my Mother forsake me, as they must do at the Hour of Death, then the Lord will take me up*, Psal. xxvii. 10. And you rejoice in that glorious Promise, *Be ye separate from Idols*, saith the Lord; *i. e.* Separate your selves from the sinful Practices of the World, *and I will receive you, and I will be a Father to you, and ye shall be my Sons and my Daughters*, saith the Lord Almighty, 2 Cor. vi. ult. Has Death enter'd into a Family, and taken the Head, the Husband away? The Words of *Isaiah* grow sweeter than ever; *Isa. liv. 5. Thy Maker is thy Husband, the Lord of Hosts is his Name, even the*

*the God of the whole Earth.* Are the Widows and the fatherless Children in danger of Oppression, because they have lost their Defender? They run to the *lxviii<sup>th</sup> Psalm*, and live upon the *5<sup>th</sup> Verse* of it; *A Father of the Fatherless, and a Judge of the Widows, is God in his holy Habitation.* Is a Brother summon'd away by the Stroke of Death? But the Lord *Jesus* is alive still: He that *took Flesh and Blood* upon him, that he might be made like the rest of the *Children of God*, *He is not ashamed to call them Brethren*, Heb. ii. 11. This is a *Brother that was born for the Day of our Adversity*; this is the *Friend that sticks closer than a Brother*, and abides with us when a Brother departs, according to the Expression of the wise Man, *Prov. xvii. 17. and xviii. 24.* Thus the Names, and Characters, and Relations of *God the Father* and of our *Lord Jesus Christ*, acquire a new Sweetness, and appear with greater Love and Glory in them, at the Death of our earthly Relatives.

There's many a Christian can speak feelingly, and say, "Never did I live so much upon my God, "I never knew nor lov'd my Saviour so well, never convers'd so much with his Word, never did I find such Sweetness in his Names, nor his Promises, nor such Pleasure in secret Converse with him, as I have done since the Day I lost such a Friend, or such a dear Relation by the Stroke of Death: I have learnt now to put no Trust in Creatures; *for their Breath goes forth, and that very Day their Thoughts of Kindness perish*, Psal. cxlvi. 3, 4, 5, &c. Now *refuge fails me, no Man seems to be concern'd for me*, since the Death of such a Friend; I say, therefore, *to my God, thou art my Refuge*, Psal. cxlii. 4, 5.

III. The Death of our dearest Friend calls us to a noble Trial of our Love to God, and our Submission to his Sovereignty. Human Nature indeed is afraid of Trials; but when the present Aids of divine Grace give

give us the Victory, then *Blessed is the Man that endures Temptation; for when he is tried he shall receive the Crown of Life, which the Lord has promised to them that love him, James i. 12.* And upon this Account he exhorts Christians in the second *Verse*, to a very sublime and difficult Practice, *My Brethren, count it all Joy when ye fall into divers Temptations, knowing this, that the Trial of your Faith worketh Patience, and if it endures the Trial, it will be found unto Praise, and Honour, and Glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ, 1 Pet. i. 7.*

When God sends his Messenger of Death, and takes a dear and beloved Creature from our Arms, or our Bosom, the divine Question is like that of our Lord to *Peter, Simon, lovest thou me?* “ Christian, lovest thou me more than thou lovest this  
“ Creature? Art thou willing to resign this Com-  
“ fort at my Call? Hast thou not given thy self  
“ to me, and does thy Heart refuse to give up thy  
“ Son, thy Brother, or thy dearest Friend? Hast  
“ thou not called me thy Sovereign? I am come  
“ now to enquire into thy Sincerity. Dost thou re-  
“ sign thy most beloved Objects to my Disposal?  
“ I gave up my Son to Death for you; and have  
“ you any thing so dear to you as my Son was to  
“ me? What says your Heart in answer to these  
“ solemn Questions? Do you love me above all  
“ Things, or no? Is your Will bow’d down to  
“ my Foot? Can you now repeat from your very  
“ Souls the same Language, in which you have  
“ often address’d me in your Closets, and in my  
“ Sanctuary, *I am thine, Lord, I am thine; all  
“ that I have is thine?* Or do you murmur and  
“ quarrel at my Providence, when I send my Ser-  
“ vant *Death* to your House, to try whether these  
“ Professions of yours were sincere or no?

Happy the Christian that comes off with Honour in this Hour of Trial, and who can say heartily,  
*Lord, I resign what thou demandest, and am angry with*  
my

*myself that I should find so much Reluctance in my Heart, to surrender any thing at the Call of God. What a shining Evidence of our Sincerity is obtain'd at such a Season? What a noble Proof of our supreme Love to God? And it shall be recorded in Heaven for our Honour, and produced in the Day of the Lord Jesus?*

There's nothing in all the History of *Abraham*, the Father of the Faithful, that gives him a more shining Character on Earth, or, perhaps, in Heaven, than that he gave up his Son *Isaac* at the Command of God, and *took the Wood, and the Fire, and the Knife in his Hand*, and devoted his Beloved, his only Son to Death; though 'twas in a Way so terribly painful, and so shocking to Nature, that he himself must be the Executioner. He had offer'd the precious Sacrifice already in his Heart, when the *Angel of the Lord* came down and stopt his Hand: *Now I know that thou fearest God*, and I know that thou lovest him too, *seeing thou hast not with-held thy Son, thine only Son from me*, Gen. xxii. 12.

Thus the Death of the dearest Relation turns greatly to our Advantage, when it gives us so bright an Evidence of our own Graces, and assures us that we are hearty Lovers of God.

IV. The Death of a beloved Relative, has often wrought for the Good of a Saint, *when the long and painful Sorrow which has attended it, has shewn us how dangerous a Thing it was to love a Creature too well.*

“ O! What a Wound do I feel at my Heart,  
 “ says a Christian, since the Death of so near a  
 “ Relation: It pains me all the Day: It fills my  
 “ Eyes with Tears, and forbids my Rest in the  
 “ Night: I am so troubled that I cannot sleep: It  
 “ unfits me for the present Duties of Life, and  
 “ hangs too heavy upon me, in the midst of the  
 “ Duties of Religion. Surely that Creature dwelt  
 “ too



“ too near my Heart, and was join’d in too close a  
“ Union, since my Heart bleeds and smarts so  
“ long after the parting Stroke. Let me watch my  
“ Affections for time to come, and set a Guard up-  
“ on my Love, that it never, never tie my Soul so  
“ fast to a Creature again. Come down, blessed  
“ Saviour, and take faster hold of my Heart; let  
“ thine own Hand heal the Wound that Death has  
“ made, and let thy Mercy pardon the Guilt of my  
“ excessive Creature Love: Dwell thou in my Soul,  
“ my Lord and my God, and fill up all the unhap-  
“ py and painful Vacancy: Keep my Affections  
“ for ever true to thee, and let my Love to thee be  
“ supreme and unrival’d; nor let the softer Pas-  
“ sions of my Nature wander and lose themselves a-  
“ mongst Creatures again, lest they contract new  
“ Guilt; lest they provoke thee to repeat the same  
“ smarting Tragedy, and to renew these Scenes of  
“ Mourning.

V. The Death of our Kindred is for our Advantage, when *it awakens us to review our own Conduct toward them, whether we have behaved aright or no, and when it quickens our Duty to surviving Relatives.*

While they are alive, and present with us, our Neglect of Duty towards them does not so soon strike our Consciences; but when the Stroke of Death divides them from us in this World for ever, we are ready then to bethink ourselves, whether our Carriage toward them has been just and kind: And if our Enquiry finds out our Guilt, our Hearts are tender at that Season, and we soon yield to the Conviction. “ Did I pay that Duty to a Father,  
“ which he well deserved, and which God requir-  
“ ed? Did I treat a Mother with that filial Affecti-  
“ on, and submissive Tenderness that became a  
“ Child? Did I pay that just Deference and Ho-  
“ nour to the Counsels and Advice of my Parents as  
“ I should have done? Did I treat my Sisters with  
“ that

“ that decent Affection and Respect that became  
 “ me? And did I exercise Brotherly Love toward  
 “ all my equal Relatives? Or has my Conduct been  
 “ undutiful, unkind, and unbecoming?”

And especially if we have this to charge ourselves  
 with, *that we took no Care for the Welfare of the Souls*  
*of those that are dead.* Such Thoughts as these will  
 hang heavy about the Heart, and press hard upon  
 the Conscience in that Day. “ Did I not see my  
 “ Child, or my Brother walk in the Ways of Sin,  
 “ and yet did I ever give him a Hint of his dreadful  
 “ Danger? Did I fear that he was a Stranger to  
 “ the Grace of God, and yet did I not neglect to in-  
 “ vite him to receive the Gospel? Had I not reason  
 “ to question whether he was a sincere Convert or  
 “ no? But how little have I done toward his Con-  
 “ version?”

“ Or if he was ever concern’d about the Affairs  
 “ of his Soul, and awaken’d and thoughtful about  
 “ Death and Hell; did I direct him in the Way of  
 “ Peace? Did I endeavour to lead him to *Jesus* the  
 “ Saviour? Or did I let him go on without Instru-  
 “ ction, and without Comfort, till Death laid its  
 “ cold Hands upon him; and he plung’d into the  
 “ eternal World at a mournful Uncertainty? O  
 “ my Heart! my Heart! The Anguish of it pains  
 “ me beyond what I am able to bear. O that I  
 “ could recal my Brother, or my Son, from the  
 “ Grave! How would I follow him with Counsels  
 “ and Intreaties? And neither give him nor myself  
 “ any Rest, till I had good Hope, through Grace,  
 “ that he had fled for Refuge to lay hold on *Christ*  
 “ and his Salvation. I would never be at Ease, nor  
 “ would I cease pleading for him at the Throne of  
 “ Grace, till I had found some Evidences of a new  
 “ Nature in him, and a Change of Heart from Sin  
 “ to Repentance and Holiness.

“ Or suppose my departed Relative was a true  
 “ Christian, What did I do toward the Increase of  
 “ his

“ his Faith? Did I ever allure him to holy Con-  
“ versation? Did I take Occasion now and then to  
“ introduce religious Discourse? Did I converse with  
“ him ever about the Matters of our common Sal-  
“ vation, that as *Iron sharpens Iron*, so we might  
“ have quickned each other's Zeal and Love, and  
“ helped each other onward in our Way to Hea-  
“ ven?

“ Surely I have found myself too guilty in some  
“ of these Instances. Forgive my criminal Neg-  
“ ligence, O my God, and through thy Grace, I  
“ will apply myself to double Diligence, with Re-  
“ gard to my Relatives that yet survive: I'll en-  
“ quire as far as it is proper into the State of their  
“ Souls: I'll seek the most powerful and the kindest  
“ Methods to awaken the thoughtless Sinners a-  
“ mongst them; and I'll study, and pray, and ask  
“ God what I shall say to make a deep Impression  
“ upon their Hearts: And though I have no Office  
“ in the Church, yet what I have learnt there, I'll  
“ talk over at home: I'll preach *Christ* crucified,  
“ and all his Gospel to them, as God shall give me  
“ proper Opportunity. I'll converse more freely  
“ with my pious Kindred about the Things of God,  
“ and learn their inward Sentiments of Religion and  
“ experimental Godliness. Thus will I bring holy  
“ Discourse into the Parlour and the Chamber; and  
“ every Soul in my House shall be a Witness of my  
“ Endeavours to promote the eternal Welfare of  
“ those that are near me”.

Now when the Death of a near Relation attains  
such an End as this, and raises our Repentance and  
holy Zeal at this Rate, we cannot doubt but that  
we receive sensible Advantage by it.

VI. The Death of our Friends, who were truly  
religious, inclines us to review their Instructions and  
their Virtues, and sets them before our Eyes in a fresh  
and lively Manner to influence our own Practice.

We

We are too ready to forget *their Advice* while they are living and daily present with us, and we take too little notice of those *Virtues* in which they were eminent. We beheld their Humility toward God and Men, their Condescension to their Inferiors, their Love and hearty Friendship toward their Equals, and their sweetness of Temper toward all around them. We beheld it, and, perhaps, we lov'd and honour'd them for it; but we took but little Pains to copy after them. We saw their Pity to the Poor and the Miserable, their Charity to Persons of different Sects and Sentiments in Religion; their readiness to forgive those that Offended them, and their Good-will and obliging Carriage to all Men. There was a Beauty and Loveliness in this Conduct that render'd them Amiable indeed; but how little have we transcrib'd of their Example, either into our Hearts or our Lives? We observ'd their constant Tenderness of Conscience, their Devotion toward God, and their Zeal for the Honour of *Christ* and his Gospel in the World. O that we had made these Graces the Matter of our Imitation! What can we do now more to honour their Memory, than to speak, and live, and act like them?

It may be we have got their Pictures drawn by some skilful Hand, and their Images hang round us in their *best Likeness*, as tender Memorials of what we once enjoy'd, to give us now and then a melancholy Delight; and awaken in us the pleasing Sadness of Love. These we call our most precious Pieces of Furniture, and our Hearts rate them at an uncommon Price. But it would be much richer Furniture for our Souls to have the *best Likeness* of our pious Predecessors and Kindred copied out there. Let us now and then reflect what were their peculiar Virtues, and the remarkable Graces that adorned them; and if we could imagine the Spirit of each of them to look down upon us, through those Eyes which the Pencil has so well imitated, and to speak  
through



through those Lips; each of them would say, in the Language of the softest and most sacred Affection; *Be ye Followers of me as dear Children, so far as I was a Follower of Christ.*

And this Thought I would more especially impress on those who were most unhappily negligent of the pious Counsel of their Ancestors, or ran counter to their holy Advice and Example in their Lifetime. "I was too regardless (may a young Christian say) of the wise and weighty Sayings of my *Father deceased*, they return now upon my Thoughts, with a fresh and living Influence. I have been too ready to neglect what a *kind Mother* taught me; but the Instructions that I received from her dying Lips, had such an Air of Solemnity and Tenderneſs in them, that they have made a deep Impreſſion upon my Heart; and I hope I shall never forget them. The prudent and pious Rules that my *elder Relations* have often set before me, recur to my Thoughts with double Efficacy since their Death: I shall hear them speak no more, I shall see their holy Examples no more: I'll gather up the Fragments of their religious Counsels, and make them the Rule of my Conduct: I am well assur'd their Souls are happy, and by the Grace of God I'll tread in their Steps, till I arrive at those blessed Regions, where I hope to meet them."

This Thought leads me on to the last Instance of Benefit which we derive from the Death of our Kindred in the Flesh,

VII. The Death of dear and near Relations *calls our Thoughts in a more powerful and sensible Manner, to converse with the Grave and Eternity.*

When our Neighbours or our common Acquaintance die, we attend the Funeral, and cast an Eye into the Grave; we spend a Thought or two on the Pit of Corruption, and the mouldring Dust: We a-

waken a Meditation or two on Things heavenly and the World to come; and we return quickly, and busily to this World again: But when God sends Death into our Chambers, and it makes a Slaughter there, it awakens us more effectually from a drowsy Frame, and it nails our Thoughts down to our most important and everlasting Concerns. "Part of me  
 "is gone to the Dust already, 'tis not long e're the  
 "surviving Part shall go also. Death has smitten  
 "the Desire of my Eyes, and the Partner of my  
 "Joys, it will strike me e're long, and am I ready?" This Thought dwells upon the Heart of a true Christian at such a Season, and while the Spirit of God assists the Work, 'tis not in the Power of all the Trifles in this Earth to banish the holy Thought, and carnalize the Mind again. As when a Man is seiz'd with a dead Palsy, or has a Limb cut off, and buried in the Dust, how sensibly does this awaken in him the Thoughts of Death and Futurity? "The Sentence of Death is begun to be  
 "executed on me already, and the whole Execution will be quickly fulfill'd; 'tis Time now to  
 "be ready, for Death is in good Earnest, and has  
 "begun his Work."

And if our departed Relative were a Christian indeed, and gave us comfortable Hope in his Death, then it leads our Thoughts naturally to Heaven, and most powerfully touches the Springs of our heavenly Hopes: It raises our pious Wishes to the upper World, and we say as *Thomas* did at the Death of *Lazarus*, *Let us go, that we may die with him.*  
 "Let us go to our God and our holy Kindred, and  
 "enjoy their better Presence there. Let us not  
 "sorrow for the Dead as those that mourn without Hope,  
 "but look upward to Things unseen, and forward  
 "to the great Rising-Day, and rejoice in the promised and future Glories that are beyond Life and  
 "Time."

Every dear Relative that dies and leaves us, gives us one Motive more to be willing to die: Their Death furnishes us with one new Allurement toward Heaven, and breaks off one of the Fetters and Bonds that ty'd us down to this Earth. Alas! we are ty'd too fast to these earthly Tabernacles, these Prisons of Flesh and Blood. We are attach'd too much to Flesh and Blood still, though we find them such painful and such sinful Companions. We love to tarry in this World too well, tho' we meet with so many weaning Strokes to divide our Hearts from it. O'tis good to live more at a loose from Earth, that we may be ready for the parting Hour: Let us not be angry with the sovereign hand of God that breaks one Bond after another; tho' the Strokes be painful, yet they loosen our Spirits from this Cottage of Clay, they teach us to practise a Flight Heavenward in holy Meditations and devout Breathings; and we learn to say, *How long, O Lord, how long?*

## THE RECOLLECTION.

Have any of us lately felt such parting Strokes as these? Have we lost any of our beloved Kindred? God calls upon us now, and enquires, *What have you learnt of these divine Lessons?* I would ask myself this Day, Have I seen the Emptiness and the Insufficiency of Creatures, and recall'd my Hope and Confidence from every Thing beneath and beside God? Have I past through this solemn Hour of Trial well, and shewn my supreme Love to God, and my most entire Submission to his Sovereignty, by resigning so dear a Comfort at his Demand? Have I been taught by the inward Pain which I felt at parting, and by the Smart which still remains, how dangerous a Thing it is to love a Creature too well? Have I duly consider'd my past Conduct toward my Relations deceas'd, and does it approve itself to my

Conscience at the Review? Or have I found Matter for Self-condemnation and Repentance? Have I treasur'd up the Memory of their Virtues in my Heart, and set them before me as the Copy of my Life? Have my Thoughts follow'd the Soul of my dear departed Friend, and traced it with Pleasure to the World of blessed Spirits; and does my own Soul seem to fix its Hope and Joy there, and to dwell there above? Are my Thoughts become more spiritual and heavenly? Do I live more as a Borderer on the other World, since a Piece of me is gone thither? And am I ready for the Summons if it should come before to morrow?

Happy Christian, who has been taught by the Spirit of Grace to improve the Death even of the dearest Relative to so divine an Advantage! The Words of my Text are then fulfill'd experimentally in you: *Death is yours*: Death itself is made a Part of your Treasures. The parting Stroke is painful indeed, but it carries a Blessing in it too; for it has promoted your heavenly and eternal Interest. *Amen.*







## SERMON XLIII.

Death a Blessing to the Saints.

I COR. iii. 22.

—*Whether Life or Death,*—*All are yours.*

**W**E have already seen many divine Comforts, and a rich Variety of Blessings derived from the formidable Name of DEATH: One would scarce have thought that a Word of so much *Terror* should have ever been capable of yielding so much *Sweetness*; but the Gospel of *Christ* is a Spring of Wonders: It has consecrated all the terrible Things in Nature, even *Death* itself, and every Thing beside *Sin*, to the Benefit of the Saint.

*Death*, in all its Appearances, may furnish the Mind of a Believer with some sacred Lesson of Truth or Holiness. When it appears in the Extent of its Dominion, and bringing all Mankind down to the Dust; when it lays hold on an impenitent Sinner, and fills his Flesh and Soul with Agonies; when it assaults a Saint, and is conquer'd by Faith; when it makes a wide Ravage among our Acquaintance, when it enters into our Families, and takes away our near and dear Relatives from the midst of us, still the Christian may reap some divine Advantage by it.

E c 3

But

But can *our own Death* be ever turned into a Blessing too? Nature thinks it hard to learn such a strange Lesson as this, and has much ado to be persuaded to believe it. How dismal are its Attendants to Flesh and Blood! What Languishings of the Body! What painful Agonies! What Tremblings and Convulsions in Nature frequently attend the dying Hour even of the best of Christians! Can that be a *Blessing* which turns this active and beautiful Engine of the Body into loathsome Clay; which closes these Eyes in long Darkness, and deprives us of every Sense? Can *Death* become a *Blessing* to us, which cuts us off from all Converse with the Sun and Moon, and that rich variety of sensible Objects which furnish out such delightful Scenes all around us, and entertain the whole animal Creation? Can that be a *Blessing* which divides asunder those two intimate Friends, the *Flesh* and the *Spirit*, that sends one of them to the noisome Prison of the Grave, and hurries away the other into unknown Regions? Yes, The Gospel of Christ has Power and Grace enough in it to take off all these gloomy Appearances from Death, and to illuminate the darkest side of it with various Lustre. So the Sun paints the fairest Colours upon the blackest Cloud, and while the thick dark Shower is descending, it entertains our Eyes with all the Beauties of the Rainbow; a most glorious Type and Seal of the *Covenant of Grace*, that can give a pleasing Aspect to *Death* itself, and spread Light and Pleasure over the darksome Grave.

If we are Believers in *Christ*, *Death* is ours as well as *Life*. These two contrary States may each of them derive peculiar Benefits from the New Covenant. The Christian may be taught so to value and improve Life, that he may not only be patient, but chearful and thankful in the Continuance of it. This has been made evident in a large Discourse already: And yet it must be confessed, that the Advantages which

which *Death* brings to a Believer are still greater and more glorious, and this will appear in the following Particulars.

I. *Death finishes our state of Labour and Trial, and puts us in Possession of the Crown and the Prize.* St. Paul was appointed to die by the Sword of Nero, and to end his Labours and his Race in Blood; yet he rejoices to think that his Race was just at an end, and triumphs in view of the glorious Recompence. 2 Tim. iv. 7. *I have fought a good fight, I have finish'd my course, I have kept the Faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a Crown of Righteousness.* There's a Voice from Heaven that proclaims the Dead happy; upon this account, that their Toil and Fatigue is come to an End: Rev. xiv. 13. *Blessed are the Dead that die in the Lord, for they rest from their Labours, and their Works follow them;* that is, the Prize of everlasting Happiness which Christ has promised to his labouring Saints. *Be thou faithful unto Death, and I will give thee a Crown of Life.* So the weary Traveller counts the last Hour of the Day the best; for it finishes the Fatigue and Toil of the Day, and brings him to his Resting-Place. So the Soldier rejoices in the last Field of Battle; he fights with the Prize of Glory in his Eye, and ends the War with Courage, Pleasure, and Victory.

II. *Death frees us for ever from all our Errors and Mistakes, and brings us into a World of glorious Knowledge and Illumination.* The Vale of Death is a dark Passage indeed, but it leads into the Regions of perfect Light. Now we know but in part, says the Apostle, 1 Cor. xiii. 12. *Now we see but through a Glass darkly, then we shall see God and our Saviour face to face, and know them even as we are known;* not in the same Degree of Perfection indeed, but according to our Measure and Capacity, we shall know them in a way of Vision, or immediate Sight,

as God knows his Creatures, as one Man knows his Friend, whose Face he beholds with his Eyes ; or as one Spirit knows another, by some unknown Ways of Perception which belong to Spirits.

O what a new and unspeakable Pleasure will it be to the Disciples of *Christ*, and the Ministers of the Gospel, that have been tired and worn out in tedious Controversies in this World, and sorely perplexed amongst the difficult Passages of Scripture, when they shall arrive at that Region of Light and Glory, where the Darknессes of the Mind shall be all scatter'd, the Veil shall be taken off from sacred Things, and Doubts and Difficulties shall vanish for ever !

Alas ! What Desolation and Mischief has the Noise and Clamour of Controversy brought on the Church of *Christ* in all Ages ! What Quarrels and sharp Contests has it raised amongst Fellow-Christians, and especially where Zeal and Ignorance have join'd together, and brought Fire and Darknесс into the Sanctuary ! This has banish'd Charity and Love out of the House of God, and made the Spirit of God himself to depart grieved. Surely Death carries a considerable Blessing in it, as it delivers us from these Disorders, these bitter Quarrels, and appoints us a Place in the Temple of God on high, where the Axe and the Hammer never sound, where the Saw of Contention is never drawn, where the noise of War is heard no more, but perfect Light lays a Foundation for perfect and everlasting Love.

III. *Death makes an utter end of Sin, it delivers us from a state of Temptation, and conveys us into a state of perfect Holiness, Safety and Peace. The Spirits of the Just are made perfect in Holiness, when they leave this sinful and mortal Flesh, they stand without Spot or Blemish, without Fault or Infirmary of greater or lesser Size, and appear pure and undefiled before the Throne of God ; Rev. xiv. 5. Their Robes are washed and*



and made white in the Blood of the Lamb, and they serve him without Sin, Day and Night in his Temple, Rev. vii. 14, 15. When *Death* carries them away from this *World*, it carries them out of the Territories of the *Devil*; for he has no Power in that Land whither happy Souls go: And all the remaining Lusts of the *Flesh* that had their *Death's Wound* given them by renewing Grace, are now destroy'd for ever; for the *Death of the Body* is the final *Death of Sin*, and the *Grave* is, as it were, the *Burying-place* of many unruly Iniquities that have too often defiled and disquieted the Spirit.

And as the corrupt Affections which are mingled with our *Flesh* and *Blood*, and which are rooted deep in animal Nature, are left behind us in the *Bed of Death*, so when we ascend to *Heaven* we shall find no manner of *Temptation* to revive them. There is no *Malice* or angry *Resentment* to be awaken'd there, no Incitements to *Envy*, *Intemperance*, or the cursed Sin of *Pride*, that cleaves so close to our Natures here on Earth.

When we are encompassed with those blessed Creatures, Angels and Saints made perfect, we shall meet with no Affront, no Reproach, no Injury, to provoke our Anger, or kindle an uneasy Passion. Most perfect Friendship is ever practised there; 'tis a Region of Peace, a World of immortal Amity.

Nor shall we find any Temptation to *Envy* in that happy State; for tho' there are different Ranks of glorified Creatures, yet each is fill'd with a holy Satisfaction, and hath an inward Relish of his own Felicity, suited to his own Capacity and State, and they have all a general Relish of the common Joy, and a mutual Satisfaction in each other's Happiness. *Envy*, that fretful Passion, is no more.

In Heaven there are no Provocations to those unruly Appetites, which break in upon our *Temperance*, and pollute our Souls.

*Pride and Haughtiness of Spirit* have no Room in that blessed World: The superior Order of Saints which are nearest the Throne shall not despise the meanest; for the nearer they approach to the perfect Image of *Christ*, the more intense and diffusive is their Love. Besides, every Saint in Glory shall see himself in his own Nothingness, and infinitely indebted to divine Grace for all Things: This shall for ever forbid all *Vanity and Conceit of Merit*. In Heaven we shall see God in the Fulness of his Glory, and shall have so penetrating a Sense of his saving Grace, that a Creature rescued from Hell cannot be proud there.

Rejoice then, ye poor feeble Christians, that have been long wrestling with your indwelling Sins, and maintaining a holy and daily Fight, with strong and restless Corruptions in your Nature: *Lift up your Heads* at the Thoughts of Death, for the *Day of your Redemption draws nigh*. Death is your Deliverer. 'Tis like the Angel that *Christ* sent to *Peter*, to knock off his Fetters, and release him from the Prison; it may smite and surprize you, and it has indeed a dark and unlovely Aspect; but its Message is Light and Peace, Holiness and Salvation.

IV. *Death is ours, for it takes us away from under all the Threatnings of God in his Word, and places us in the actual Possession of the greatest Part of the Blessings that God has promised us, Heb. vi. 12.* The Saints that are dead are thus described; they are *those who through Faith and Patience inherit the Promises*.

Whilst we are in this Life, there are many *Threatnings* in the Bible that belong to the Saints as well as to Sinners. I shall mention that great and general one that is annexed to the Covenant of Grace, *Psal. lxxxix. 30. If the Children of Christ forsake my Law and walk not in my Judgments, then will I visit their Transgression with a Rod, and their Iniquity with Stripes*; but when Death has convey'd them into the Presence of their heavenly

heavenly Father, they shall forsake his Law no more, there are no more Transgressions for the Rod to correct, the Stripes of Chastisement cease for ever, and their Father and their God shall be angry no more.

The *best Part of the Promises* are fulfill'd when a Soul arrives at Heaven. The Promise of the *Resurrection of the Body* yet remains unaccomplished indeed; but every separate Spirit in Heaven waits for it with full Assurance of Accomplishment. I have found, says the holy Soul, so many rich Promises of the Covenant fulfill'd already, and I am in the Possession of so many divine Blessings that God once foretold, that I am well assured that my *God is faithful who has promised*, and the rest shall be all fulfill'd.

V. *Death raises us above the mean and trifling Pleasures of the present State, as well as delivers us from all present Pains, and brings us into a World of perfect Ease, and superior and refin'd Delight.* It divides us from the Pains and Pleasures that we derive from the *first Adam*, and sets us in the midst of superior Blessings which the *second Adam* has purchased for us. *We shall hunger no more, we shall thirst no more, neither shall the scorching Heat of the Sun light upon us, or any painful Influence from the Elements of this World: The Lamb which is in the midst of the Throne shall feed us with celestial Food, suited to our purified Natures, and lead us to drink full Draughts of unknown Pleasure, which is described by living Fountains of Water.* We shall see *God himself*, the original Beauty, and the Spring of all Delight: We shall see our Lord *Jesus Christ* the most illustrious Copy of the Father, the *Brightness of his Glory*, and the *express Image of his Person*, and *God himself shall wipe away all Tears from our Eyes*, Rev. vii. 16, 17. Though the *Wages of Sin is Death* by the Appointment of the Law of God, Rom. vi. ult. yet this very *Death* is constrain'd to serve

serve the Purposes of our great Redeemer; and it brings us into the Possession of that *eternal Life*, which is the *Gift of God through Jesus Christ our Lord*.

VI. *Death not only gives us Possession of promised Blessings, but it banishes all our Fears and Doubts for ever, by fixing us in a State of Happiness unchangeable.* They that are once enter'd into the Temple of God on high shall no more go out of it, Rev. iii. 12. For they are established in the House of God, they are as Pillars there, they become a Part of that vast and living Temple, in which God dwells for ever in all his Glory.

*Death is ours*; for it finishes our Fears, it fulfils our Wishes and our Hopes, and leaves us no more room to fear to all Eternity. When we behold the face of God in Righteousness, and awake out of this World of Dreams and Shadows, in the World of happy Spirits, with the likeness of God upon us, we shall find sweet Satisfaction; Psal. xvii. 15. *I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness.* Death leaves a Saint, as it were, but one thing to wish or hope for, and that is the Resurrection or the Accomplishment of this Text in its compleatest Sense, viz. that their Bodies may awake out of the Grave with the Likeness of Christ upon them, and be made conformable to his glorious Body, in Vigour, Beauty, and Immortality.

VII. *Death is a Happiness to a Christian*; for it divides him for ever from the Company of Sinners and Enemies, and places him in the Society of his best Friends, his God, and his Saviour, his Fellow Saints, and the innumerable Company of Angels. O how sorely has the Soul of many a Saint been vexed here on Earth, as the Soul of Lot was in Sodom, with the Conversation of the Wicked! How have they often complained of the Hidings of the Face of God, of the Absence of



of *Christ* their Lord, and the sensible Withdrawings of the Influences of the blessed Spirit!

There is a great Partition-Wall betwixt us and the happy World, whilst we are in this Life; the Veil of Flesh and Blood divides us from the World of Spirits, and from the glorious Inhabitants of it. With what surprizing Joy shall a poor, humble, watchful Christian, that has been teized long, and long tormented with the Company of the Wicked, enter into that illustrious and blessed Society, when Death shall break down the Partition-Wall, and rend the Veil of Flesh and Blood that divided him from them, and kept him at a painful Distance!

“ ’Tis better, infinitely better, shall the departed Soul say, to see God without the *Medium* of such Ordinances as I have used on Earth: ’Tis better to be *absent from the Body*, and to be *present with the Lord Jesus*. ’Tis better to ascend and worship in the midst of the heavenly *Jerusalem*, and amongst that blessed *Assembly of the First-born*, than to be joined to the purest Churches on Earth, or be engaged in the noblest Acts of Worship, which the State of Mortality admits of. Farewel Sins and Sinners for ever: Temptations and Tempters, farewel to all Eternity. And ye my dear holy Friends, beloved in the Lord, my pious Relatives, my Companions in Faith and Worship, farewel, but for a short Season, ’till you also shall be released from your present Bondage and Imprisonment by the Messenger of Death: Fear it not, for it is your Lord, and my Lord, your Saviour and mine, who sends it to release you from all the Evils which you have long groan’d under, and to bring you to our Father’s House, where the Businesses, the Pleasures, and the Company are infinitely agreeable and entertaining”.

Thus have I shewn in various Instances, how the Death of a Believer in general is appointed to work for his Good, and becomes an Advantage to him through the

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the Grace of *Christ*. I proceed to shew how the Death of a Christian in all the *particular Circumstances* that attend it has something in it that may be turned to his Benefit.

*Christ has the Keys of Death and the Grave; he was dead and is alive, and behold he lives for evermore; Rev. i. 18.* And he knows how to manage all the Circumstances of the Death of his Saints for their Profit: He appoints the *Time* when, the *Manner* how, and the *Place* where they shall die, and determines all these Things by Rules of unsearchable Wisdom, under the Influence of his Faithfulness and his Love.

1. *The Time when we shall die is appointed by Christ.* If he call us away in the Days of our Youth, he secures us thereby from many a Temptation, and many a Sin, for our Life on Earth is subject to daily Defilements. He prevents also many a Sorrow and Distress of Mind, many an Agony and sharp Pain to which our Flesh is subject, and saves us from all the languishing Weaknesses of old Age, and from tasting the Dregs of Mortality.

When our blessed Lord foresees some huge and heavy Sorrows ready to fall upon us, or some mighty Temptations approaching toward us, he lays his Hand upon us in the midst of Life, and hides us in the Grave. This has been the sweet Hiding-Place of many a Saint of God, from a Day of publick Temptation and over-spreading Misery.

If he lengthens out our Life to many Years, we have a fair Opportunity of doing much more Service for our God, and our Redeemer; and we also enjoy the longer Experience of his Power, his Wisdom, and his faithful Mercy, in guiding us through many a dark Difficulty, in supporting us under many a heavy Burden, and delivering our Souls from many a Threatning Temptation. Oftentimes he sweetens the Passage of his aged Saints through the dark Valley, with nearer and brighter Views of the heavenly World:

World: He gives them a strong and earnest Expectation of Glory, and some sweet Foretastes of it, to bear them up under the Languors of old Age and Sickness: The Haven of Rest becomes sweeter to them, when they have past through many tedious Storms: The Hour of Release into the World of Light is more exquisitely pleasing after a tedious Imprisonment in the Flesh, and long Years of Darkness.

2. *The manner how we shall die is appointed also by Christ our Lord, for the Benefit of his Saints.* If Death smite us with a sudden and unexpected Stroke, then we are surprized into the World of Pleasure at once, and e're we are aware our Souls find themselves in the midst of the Paradise of God, surrounded with Joys unspeakable. If our mortal Nature decay by slow Degrees, we have a precious Opportunity for the more lively Exercises of Faith; we may then converse with Death beforehand, and daily grow in Preparation for our Departure. We see ourselves launching down the Stream of Time, and if our Faith be awake and sprightly, we rejoice in the sensible and hourly Approaches of Heaven and Eternity. We may speak many useful dying Sentences for the Glory of our Lord, and make happy Impressions upon the Souls of those we leave behind: We may invite and require, we may allure and charge our dear Relatives to follow us in the same Path, and to meet us before the Throne.

3. *Our Lord also designs our Benefit when he appoints the Place of our Death;* whether we shall quit the Body at home or abroad; for some of us he sees it best that our Friends should stand round us and close our Eyes, and, as it were, see our Spirits take their Flight into the invisible World, that they may assist and support us with divine Words of Consolation, or that they themselves may learn and dare to die, and be animated by our Example to encounter the last Enemy. Our Lord sees it proper for others of his  
Saints

Saints to die in the midst of Strangers, or, perhaps, amongst Enemies, and by a violent Death, that he may thereby give a glorious Testimony to their Faith and Piety, as well as to the Power of his own Gospel. Whether we breathe our last at Land or at Sea, in our native Country, or in a Foreign Climate, *all shall work together for the final Welfare of those that love God, and are called and justified and sanctified according to his holy Purpose*, Rom. viii. 28.

There are, doubtless, some peculiar and secret Reasons in the grand comprehensive Scheme of the Counsels and Decrees of God, why the Death of every Saint is appointed at this Season, and not at another; why some young Buds are cropt e're they blossom on Earth, and transplanted to open and unfold themselves, and shine in the Garden of God on high, while others are brought home into the heavenly Garner, like Fruit well grown, or like a Shock of Corn fully ripe. There's a divine Reason why some are hurried away by a violent Death, and others are permitted naturally to dissolve into their Dust: Why some must die on this Spot of Ground, and others on that; for the vast *Scheme of his Counsels* has a glorious Consistency in it with the *Covenant of his Grace*: And indeed, the Covenant of Grace runs through the whole Scheme of divine Counsels, and mingles itself with them all. We rejoice in this Meditation while we believe the Truth of it. We are persuaded that we shall know hereafter the various and admirable Designs of divine Providence and Love, in all the infinite Variety of the Deaths of his Saints; and this shall make part of our Songs in the upper World, and give a joyful Accent to our *Hallelujahs* there.

Let us maintain therefore, a blessed Assurance of the wise and gracious Designs of our Lord, in *all the Circumstances of the Death* of his People. Let us learn to say with that aged Saint and eminent Servant of *Christ*, the Rev. Mr. *Baxter*, when under many Weaknesses



nesses of Nature, and long and sore Agonies of Pain, he spake concerning his Death, *Lord, when thou wilt, what thou wilt, how thou wilt.* Let us ensure our Souls in his Hands for Eternity, and not be over solicitous about the Circumstances of our Death, about the *Place*, the *Manner*, or the *Hour*, when we shall take our Leave of Life and Time.

[*If this Sermon be too long it may be divided here.*]

Having made it appear in these several Sermons, that *Death is ours*, or shall turn to our Advantage, not only when it strikes our Friends or Strangers, but when it seizes our own Flesh also: I desire to conclude this Subject of Discourse with various *Inferences*, of which some may be called *Doctrinal*, and others *Practical*.

The *Doctrinal Inferences* are these:

Infer. I. *How different is the Judgment of Sense, from the Judgment of Faith!* The *Eye of Sense* looks upon Death as a Sovereign and cruel Tyrant; reigning over all Nature and Nations, and making dreadful Havock among Mankind, as it were, after his own Will and Pleasure; but *Faith* beholds it as a Slave subdu'd to the Power of *Christ*; and constrained to act under his sovereign Influence for the Good of all his Saints. *Sense* teaches us to look upon our selves as the Possession and the Food of Death; but *Faith* assures us that Death is our Possession, and a Part of our Treasure. *Death is yours, O Christians, for all Things are yours.*

When *Sense* has the Ascendant over us, we take Death to be a dark and dismal Hour; but in the Speech and Spirit of *Faith*, we call it a bright and glorious one. *Sense* esteems it to be the forest of all Afflictions, but *Faith* numbers it among the sweetest of our Blessings, because it delivers us from a thousand Sins and Sorrows.

It has been reported, that *Socrates* called *Death a Birth-day into eternal Life*. A most glorious Thought, and a very inviting Name! But 'tis strange that a *Heathen* Philosopher should ever hit upon it, 'tis so much like the Dialect of the Gospel, and the Language of Faith. He had learnt to talk more nobly than the sensual World, though he was not favour'd with the Light of the Gospel. 'Tis so much the more shameful for *Christians* to talk and live below the Character of this Philosopher.

O when shall we get above this *Life of Sense*? When shall we rise in our Ideas and our Judgment of Things? When shall we attain to the upper Regions of Christianity, and breathe in a purer Air, and see all Things in a brighter and better Light? When shall we live the *Life of Faith*, and learn its divine Language? Death is like a thick dark Veil, as it appears to the eye of *Sense*; when shall our *Faith* remove the Veil, and see the Light, the Immortality, the Glory that lies beyond it? Death, like the River *Jordan*, seems to overflow its Banks when we approach it, and divides and affrights us from the heavenly *Canaan*: When shall we climb to the top of *Pisgab*, that we may look beyond the swelling Waves of this *Jordan*, and take a fair and inviting Prospect of the promised Land?

Infer. II. *How glorious and how dreadful is the Difference between the Death of a Saint and that of a Sinner, a Soul that is in Christ, and a Soul that has no Interest in him!* The Death of every Sinner has all that real Evil and Terror in it, in which it appears to an Eye of Sense; but a *convinced Sinner* beholds it yet a thousand Times more dreadful. When Conscience is awaken'd upon the Borders of the Grave, it beholds Death in its utmost Horror, as the Curse of the broken Law, as the Accomplishment of the Threatnings of an angry God. A guilty Conscience looks on Death with all its formidable Attendants round it, and espies an endless Train of Sorrows coming

ing after it. Such a Wretch beholds *Death* riding towards him *on a pale Horse*, and *Hell* following at his Heels, without all Relief or Remedy, without a Saviour, and without Hope.

But a true Christian, when he reads the Name of *Death* among the Curses of the Law, knows that *Christ* his Saviour and his Surety, has sustain'd it in that dreadful Sense, and put an End to its Power and Terror. He reads its Name now in the Promises of the Gospel, and calls it a glorious Blessing, a Release from Sin and Sorrow, an Entrance into everlasting Joy. The Saint may lie calm and peaceable in the midst of all the Attendants of Death; like *Daniel* in the *Den of Lions*, for it cannot hurt or destroy him: But when a Sinner is thrown to this Devourer, it does, as it were, *break all his Bones*; it tears both his Flesh and his Spirit as its proper Prey: *Death* feeds upon him, as the Scripture expresses it, *Psal. xlix. 14.* and fills his Conscience with immortal Anguish. Who can bear the Thoughts of dying in such a State under the Dominion of Death, *without Christ*, and *without Hope*.

Infer. III. *How much does the Religion of the New Testament transcend all other Religions, both that of the Light of Nature, and all the former Revelations of Grace; for it better instructs us how to die.* The Religion of the antient Patriarchs, the Religion of *Moses* and the *Jews*, as well as the Religion of the *Philosophers*, all come vastly short of *Christianity*, in the important Business of dying.

The *Philosopher*, by the Labours of his Reason, and by a certain Hardiness of Spirit, persuades himself not to tremble at the Thoughts of Death; for *it may be there is no Hereafter*; or if there be, he wou'd fain hope for an happy one: And thus he ventures into Death with some sort of Courage and Composure of Mind, like a bold Man that is taking an immense Leap in the Dark, out of one World into another; but he can never know certainly that

there are no terrible Things to meet him in that unseen State.

The Religion of the *Jews* and *Patriarchs*, which God himself reveal'd to Men, enabled many of them to resign their Lives with Patience and Hope, and to walk through the Valley of Death without much Dismay, when the appointed Hour was come. A few of them, I confess, have been elevated by a noble Faith above the Level of that Dispensation: Yet some of them seem to make bitter Mourning because of the Shadows of Darknes that cover'd the Grave and all the Regions beyond it. They *were all their Life-time subject to Bondage through the Fear of Death*, Heb. ii. 14.

'Tis our *Jesus* alone who has brought *Life and Immortality* into so glorious a *Light by the Gospel*: He dwelt long in Heaven before he came into our World, and again he went as a Fore-runner into those unseen Worlds, and came back again and taught his Apostles what Heaven is: And thus we learn to overcome Death with all its Terrors by the richer Prospect which he has given us of the heavenly Country that lies beyond the Grave: He has taught his Followers to rejoice in dying, and to possess the Pleasures that are to be derived from Death, as it is an Entrance into the Regions of Light and Joy. Blessed be God that we were born in the Days of the *Messiah*, since *Christ* returned from the Dead, and that we are not sent either to the Schools of the Philosophers, or even to *Moses* to teach us how to die.

Infer. IV. Learn from these Discourses, *what a sweet and delightful Glory belongs to the Covenant of Grace, that turns a Curse into a Blessing*. When the broken Law or Covenant of Works attempts to curse thee with Death, O Believer, (as *Balaam* did *Israel*) *the Lord thy God turns the Curse into a Blessing to thee by this new Covenant, because the Lord thy God loved thee*, Deut. xxiii. 5. So Afflictions are turned into Mercies by the Virtue of this Covenant, they mortify  
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our Sins, they wean us from the World, they bring our Hearts near to God, they *make us Partakers of his Holiness*. So Death, which is the greatest Affliction to Nature, and has such a formidable Aspect to a sensual Man, is made subservient to the eternal Welfare of a Christian. It is this sweet Covenant that has wrought the Change; *Christ* has conquer'd it, and the Believer enjoys the Triumph.

Does the Eye of Nature behold Death as a *Serpent*? Our Lord *Jesus* has broken its Teeth, and taken away its Sting; for by his Sacrifice he has abolished Sin, which is the Sting of Death. Does Nature look upon Death as a *Lion*? Our Redeemer has slain it, and the Covenant of Grace has furnished the Carcass of it with Honey, and stored it with delicious Food for the Entertainment of a Christian; thus, *Out of the Eater comes forth Meat, and out of the Strong comes forth Sweetness*. The Riddle of *Sampson*, when apply'd in this manner, carries a diviner Beauty in it, and more exquisite Delight. And as that *Jewish Champion* feasted his Father and his Mother with Delicacies taken out of the Lion he had slain, so does our Lord feast his Brethren and his Friends with sacred Pleasures derived from Death our vanquished Enemy.

O how unspeakable is the Privilege of those that belong to *Christ*! If you are his, then *Death is yours*: *Christ* is the only begotten Son, and he *inherits all Things*; not only as a Son, but as the first *Overcomer*; *Ye all are the Sons of God by Faith in Christ Jesus*; ye shall also be *Overcomers*, and *shall inherit all Things*, Gal. iii. 26. and Rev. xxi. 7. *Whether Life or Death, Things present or Things to come, all are yours, for ye are Christ's*.

*I proceed to the practical Uses.*

I. If Death in every Sense may be turned to the Advantage of the Saints, as I have proved in the former Discourse, *Let us see then that in all its Appearances we gain some Advantage by it*. Let us not act

like Fools, who have a Prize put into their Hands, and know not how to use it.

If our Fellow-Creatures die and go down to the Dust, and the *Nations of Mankind* perish from the Earth, let us learn thereby the *Frailty of our Natures*; let us learn so to *number our Days as to apply our Hearts to Wisdom*, and be awakened to an active and immediate Preparation for the Day of our own Death. If we see *impenitent Sinners* dying under the Anguish of a guilty Conscience, let us gain a *sensible Lesson of the dreadful Evil of Sin*; let it raise such a religious Fear of the Wrath of God, and such a sacred Gratitude for our Deliverance from the Torments of Hell, as may quicken every Grace into its warmest Exercise, and its brightest Evidence. If Death seize upon our *Lord Christ himself*, his dying Groans lay a Foundation for our *immortal Hopes*: Let us meditate on the thousand Blessings we receive from his Cross and his Tomb. Do the *Saints* around us lie down and die? We should learn to follow them boldly into the dark Valley, and to fall asleep in the Dust with the same chearful Hopes of a joyful Rising-day. Does Death come near us into *our own Family*, and tear our *dear Relatives* from our Arms? Even this may be turned to our Advantage too; it should render the *World and the Pleasures of it more insipid and worthless*; it should loosen our Heart-strings from the fond Embraces of the Creature; for it calls our Eyes and our Souls heavenward and homeward, and that with a loud and sensible Voice, if Nature and Grace are awake to hear it.

If Death and the Grave be ours, and we make no Use of this Privilege, we are like *Misers*, who have Treasure in their Possession, but never employ it to any valuable Purpose. Has *Christ* our Lord taken Death among his Captives, and made it his own Property? Let us look upon ourselves as humble Sharers in the Victory; he has appointed it to serve the Interest of all his Followers: He has put it into the

the Inventory of our Treasures. Let us improve it then to these divine Purposes, let us seize and enjoy the Spoils which *Christ*; the *Captain of our Salvation*, has taken from the Hands of the Prince of Darkness.

II. Is Death become your Profession, O Believers, through the Grace of the Covenant? *Fear it not then, but ever look upon it with an Eye of Faith as a conquer'd Adversary: Behold it as reduced to your Service; wait for it with holy Courage and Pleasure; 'tis a Messenger of Mercy to your Souls from Christ, who hath vanquish'd it in the open Field of Battle, and reduced it to his Subjection.* When you labour and groan under Sins and Temptations, under Pains and Sorrows, remember *Christ* has appointed Death to be his Officer for your Relief. It is like the Porter that opens the Door of his Repository, the Grave, where your Bodies shall take a sweet Slumber till the Resurrection-Day; and 'tis appointed also to open the Gates of Heaven for your Spirits, and to let them into a World of unknown Felicity.

*Death* has so many things belonging to it, which are afflictive to Nature, and formidable to the Eye of Sense, that we have need of all manner of Assistance to raise our Souls above the Fear of it. The very Thought of *dying* makes many a Christian shudder and sweat, and tremble, and awakens all the Springs of human Infirmary; O may the Grace of Faith gain a more glorious Ascendency in our Souls! We should often meditate on such Doctrines as these, which place that dreadful thing *Death* in the most easy and pleasing Light; we should behold it as changed from a Curse into a Blessing, and numbred among our Treasures. Christians should accustom themselves to look at it through the Glass of the Gospel, which casts fair Colours upon what is in itself so dark and formidable. 'Tis the Gospel is that Glass which discovers to us the flowry Blessings

sings that grow in that gloomy Valley, and gives us a fair and delightful Prospect of those Hills of Paradise and Pleasure that lie beyond the Grave. Why should we let this blessed Gospel lie neglected, and live still in Bondage to the Fear of Dying?

#### THE RECOLLECTION.

Come now, and let us learn by this Discourse to shame ourselves out of these Weaknesses, these unreasonable Fears. Let us talk to our own Souls in the Language of Faith. Why, O my Soul, why art thou afraid to let this Body die? Hast thou not endur'd Labours and Trials enough, and art thou unwilling to come to the End of them? Hast thou not yet been tempted enough? Hast thou not been foil'd too often, and too often thrown down in the Conflict? Think of thy many Wounds of Conscience, the Bruises of thy Spirit, the Defilement of thy Garments, and the Loss of thy Purity and thy Peace. Canst thou bear that all these should be repeated again and again? Art thou unwilling this War should have an End? Art thou afraid of Victory and Triumph? What dost thou labour and fight for? Dost thou not run to obtain the Prize? Dost thou not wrestle and fight to gain the Crown? and hast thou not Courage enough to go across the dark Valley to take Possession of this Crown and this Prize?

Think, O my Spirit, think of thy painful Ignorance whilst thou dwellest in this Region of Shadows: Is not Knowledge thy natural and delicious Food? Hast thou not liv'd long enough in Darkness, and been involv'd too long in Mistakes and Errors? And art thou willing to dwell in a Land of Darkness still, a Land of Dreams and Disguises, where Truth is hardly found? Art thou afraid of the Borders of that World where Light and Knowledge



ledge grow, and where Truths and Realities appear all unveil'd and without Disguise? Where thou shalt be cheated no more with the Sound of Words, but shalt see all Things just as they are, in a clear Light, without Error, and without Confusion? O happy Period of thy Mistakes and Wanderings, of all thy learned Mazes in quest of Truth! And art thou still afraid to come near it?

Has it not been the Matter of thy sacred Mourning, that thy God is so much concealed from thee, that greatest and best of Beings? That the Son of God, *the Brightness of the Father's Glory*, is so much a Stranger, and thy Saviour is so little known? that thy Faith has been labouring and wearied in many Enquiries about the Glories of his Person as God-man, about the Wonders of his united Natures, and the Mysteries of his Gospel; about the Power of his Death, the Virtue of his Righteousness, and the Sovereignty of his Grace? And art thou afraid of the Sun-shine, and that perfect Day that shall scatter all these Clouds of Doubt and Mistake, and let thee see thy Saviour and thy God Face to Face, as they are seen by Angels? O that surprizing Hour of unknown Delight that shall place thee, O my Soul, in the midst of the World of Spirits, surrounded with the Light of Heaven, and in the open Presence of God, even thy God! When thou shalt gain swift and transporting Acquaintance with the almighty Being that made thee, and the Son of God who dwelt once in mortal Flesh, and died to save thee! When the divine Irradiations of the eternal Spirit shall unfold those Mysteries to thy View, which had so much Darkness about them in these lower Regions! What an illustrious Scene of Light and Joy shall arise all around thee as thou enterest into that unknown State! What strange new Ideas of Things, what new Worlds of Knowledge shall throng in upon thee, and thy enlarged Understanding shall receive them all with infinite Satisfaction,  
and

and with ever-growing Pleasure! Art thou not already on the Wing, my Soul, at such a divine Prospect as this? O stupid Creatures that we are, we seek after the Light of Truth here below, and croud about a little glimmering Spark of Knowledge, we wrangle all around it with endless Contention, and yet when Death would open the Gate of Glory, and admit us into Regions of Light, we start back and retire, contented to abide among Twilight and Shadows.

But, O my Soul, if Truth and Knowledge are not sufficient to allure thee, Has Holiness no constraining Power? Hast thou not sinn'd enough and broken the Laws of God often enough already? Hast thou not brought Guilt enough and Grief enough upon thyself, that thou art afraid of a State of perfect Holiness? What is it that has given thee such inward Pain as the perpetual Workings of thy native Iniquity? What is it that has made thee cry out, *O wretched Creature that I am! who shall deliver me from the Body of this Death?* From the Temptations and the Sins which are mingled with Flesh and Blood? And art thou afraid to have thy Groans ended, thy Complaints removed, and thy Deliverance appear? Art thou unwilling to accept of the Release? Dost thou shrink back from the Sight of the Deliverer? Has not thy Faith often seen the Spirits of the Just made perfect standing before the Throne, rejoicing before God, worshipping in the compleat Beauty of Holiness? and has not this thy Faith awaken'd thy Desires and thy sacred Wishes? *O that I were in the midst of them!* Why then art thou so unwilling to leave this Body of Sin and Darkness, and to go out of this troublesome and impure Prison into that glorious World, that blessed Assembly, and to worship amongst them without Imperfection and without Weariness? Consider, O my Soul, are thy Complaints of indwelling Corruption sincere? Are thy Groans for Deliverance honest and hearty?

heartly? Why then art thou afraid to let this Tabernacle be dissolved, and to gain a blessed Release from these inbred and restless Enemies? Has not the Lustre of perfect Holiness Attraction and Force enough in it to awaken thy Longings, and stretch thy Wings for a Flight to Heaven?

Remember also whilst thou art here, and art often sinning, many of the Threatnings of God in his Word stand bent against thee, his Arrows sometimes stick in thy Flesh, and pierce thy very Soul. I confess these are not the Sword of his vindictive Justice, thy Afflictions are but the Corrections of his Rod: But is it not better to dwell in that World where thou shalt feel no such correcting Strokes, and deserve Chastisement no more, where the Lord thy God shall lay aside every Frown, and remove his Anger for ever?

Thy best Life now is to live upon the Promises; but does not all the Excellency of a Promise consist in the Hope of Performance? and is not the Performance then so much better than the Promise itself? Is not Possession better than Hope? Is not an assur'd and an unchangeable Possession better than this State of Doubts and Fears? Is it not much more agreeable to *dwell in the House of God for ever*, than only to make a Visit to it now and then? Is it not infinitely better to be fix'd in a State of perfect Felicity, without the least Fear or Apprehension of losing it? to be as *a Pillar in the Temple of God*, thy God, and to go no more out?

Think again, Hast thou not sustain'd sufficient Pains and Sorrows both of Flesh and Mind in this lower World? Death shall put an end to them all; and art thou unwilling to have a full Release from Sorrow and Pain? Has this Flesh of thine been complain'd of so often as thy Clog and thy painful Prison, and art thou afraid to have thy Fetters knock'd off? Has not thy Body given thee Smart and Anguish enough? and has it not tempted thee  
enough

enough away from thy God and thy truest Happiness? Has thy sinful sickly Flesh been so charming a Companion that thou art not yet willing to part with it? Dost thou not desire to have all thy Diseases heal'd at once? Wouldst thou not be glad to have all thy Torments of Body and Mind for ever eas'd, and all the Uneasinesses of Flesh and Spirit remov'd for ever.

'Tis true, the mere Desire of Ease should not be the chief Reason why thou shouldst desire Death, nor shouldst thou seek it with an impatient Spirit: 'Tis thy Duty to bear Sufferings and Sorrows with holy Patience, as a good Soldier of Christ; 'tis thy Duty to abide in thy Post during his Pleasure, to fill up the Hours with Service, and to sustain the Fatigues and Burdens of the mortal State, to the Glory of God thy Saviour: But he does not require that thou shouldst fall in Love with a State of Guilt and Pain, a State that has so much Sin and Temptation, so much Burden and Fatigue in it; he gives thee Leave to groan after the Hour of Release and Deliverance. *In this Tabernacle we groan earnestly being burdened,* 2 Cor. v. 2.

Consider further, O my Soul, what is there in this World that should make thee fond of continuing among the Inhabitants of it? Has not the World thou dwellest in sufficiently discover'd itself to thee as a Land of meer Vanity and Vexation, and art thou fond of the Tents *Meshech* and *Kedar*, where thy Soul has so little Peace? Art thou afraid to change thy Dwelling-Place? Hast thou not been teiz'd long enough with the Company of Sinners, or the foolish and unfriendly Carriage of those who are imperfect Saints? Hast thou not been often ready to say, *O that I had the Wings of a Dove, to fly away from the windy Storm and Tempest!* to get afar off from the Rage and Malice of Enemies, from the troublesome Infirmities of Friends, afar off from the Peevishness, the Envy and the Passion of some



some of thy Fellow-Christians? How often hast thou wish'd even for a Wilderness where thou mayst be at rest? Behold the Door of Death will shortly open itself to thee, and would let thee in, not to a Wilderness, but to a Paradise, to a Place of eternal Rest and Freedom from all uneasy Society; and yet thou delayest and hangeest backward, and art afraid to go.

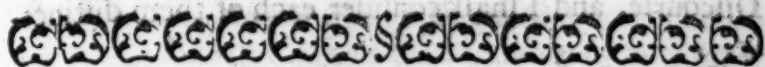
In that upper World the Saints have no Follies about them, no vicious and fretful Humours, no Springs of Vexation; they leave all their Weaknesses, their Envy and their Anger behind them in the Grave. In the heavenly Country every Companion is an everlasting Friend, and all thy dear and pious Kindred who are departed have put off every Thing that once made thee or them uneasy. They are far better Company above than ever they were, or could be, here on Earth; and dost thou not want to see them all in their best Raiment of Grace and Glory, and to hold sweet Communion with them in the purest Intercourses of Love?

But there are still sweeter Allurements to a holy Soul; *God*, even thy God, dwells in the midst of his Saints on high, and that in the full Glories of his Love: *Jesus*, thy Saviour, whom thou hast known, and whom thou hast loved, though thou hast never seen him; *Jesus* is Lord of that Country, he waits for thee there: God himself dwells there as the Fountain of Felicity, and shall be no more absent from thee. Thou shalt no more complain of the Withdrawings of the Light of his Countenance, or the short Visits of his Grace: Thou shalt sit solitary no more, nor mourn under the dark Eclipses of the Sun of Righteousness: 'Tis the Pleasure of that Heaven thou hopest for, *to be for ever with thy Lord*, to behold his Glory, *to see him as he is*, and *to be made like him*, and wilt thou not enter in at the Gate into the *new Jerusalem* when he calls thee, but tremble and start backward, because there  
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is a short dark Valley that lies on this side of it?

Remember, O my Soul, *Death is thine*: There's nothing in that dark Valley shall hurt thee. Lift up thy Head, arise, and shake thy self out of the Dust. Let thy Faith take a sweet Prospect over the little Hills of Time, and beyond the Vale of Death: Look far into the invisible World, and banish all thy Fears under the strong allurements of the Joys that are prepared for thee; wait with Pleasure for the Hour of thy Departure, and rejoice and triumph when the divine Message shall come. While thou continuest here, *Life is thine*: When thou goest hence, *Death is thine*; *Things present and Things to come are thine*; and the invisible World to which thou art hastening has everlasting Joys in reserve for thee: Heaven itself is thine: Heaven is the Inheritance of all the Saints: The Glories laid up there are waiting for thy Possession: The Dissolution of thy earthly Tabernacle shall convey thee into the midst of them.

Awake, arise and meet the happy Moment, when thou shalt be undress'd of this sinful Flesh and Blood: O let these defiled Garments ever sit loose about thee, that they may be cast off without Pain and Regret: Go, my Soul, at the Summons of thy God and Father, and when the Symptoms of dying Nature shall say, *Hark, he calleth thee*, let thy Faith, and thy Love, and thy Joy answer, *Lord, I come*. Go, my Soul, at the Invitation of thy Redeemer, at the Voice of thy Beloved: Behold he appears, he comes: Go forth and meet him. Drop this fleshly Clothing with holy Delight; arise, *put on thy beautiful Garments* and shine, for the *Glory of the Lord is rising upon thee*: Go shine among the *Spirits of the Just made perfect*, thy self a Spirit releas'd from Earth, and divested of all Imperfection. O happy Farewell to Life and Time! O glorious Entrance into Immortality!



## SERMON XLIV.

The Doctrine of the Trinity, and the  
Use of it.

EPHES. ii. 18.

*Through him we both have Access by one Spirit  
unto the Father.*

**T**HERE is hardly another Text in the Bible of so short an Extent that contains in it so much of the Substance and Glory of our holy Religion. Here we have (1.) *The Doctrine of the blessed Trinity* plainly represented. The Father and the Holy Spirit are expressly named, and the little Word *HIM* most evidently refers to *Christ the Son of God*, who is mentioned before, ver. 13. (2.) We read also in this Verse the *important Use of this great Doctrine*: We must have access to God the Father through the Mediation of his Son by the Aids of the Holy Spirit. And (3.) there is the *Union of all Nations, and the Harmony of all the true Worshipers of God* held forth in the Words, *We both have access*. This is the common and universal Method of Approach to God, for it is provided for the whole World; which is here distinguished into *Jews and Gentiles*: *We BOTH have access to the Father by one Spirit, through one Lord Jesus*.

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These three shall be the chief Divisions of my Discourse, and I shall consider each of them distinctly.

First, *The Doctrine of the blessed Trinity* is here represented to us, the *Father*, the *Son*, and the *Holy Spirit*: And in order to set this Article of our Faith in the most plain and easy Light, for the use of common Christians, I would draw it out as far as Scripture evidently leads the way into several *Propositions*.

But here let it be observed, that I am not going to present you with any of those *particular Schemes of Explication* of this Doctrine which have divided the *Trinitarian* Writers, but nakedly to represent it according to its most obvious Appearances in Scripture, and yet in such a manner as almost all our Divines have received and delivered it, who may differ in *particular Schemes of Explication*.

*Prop. I.* God is a Spirit, allwise, and almighty, infinite, eternal, unchangeable, and incomprehensible by any Creature; the first, the greatest, and the best of Beings.

Since the Word of God assures us that He is a *Spirit*, John iv. 24. since Men are called his *Offspring*, Acts xvii. 28. since *Man is the Image of God*, 1 Cor. xi. 7. it is evident that God teaches us to conceive of himself in a way of Resemblance to our own *Souls*, which are *Spirits*. We are therefore to conceive of Him as a Being which has Understanding or Consciousness and Knowledge, which has a free Will and Power of Operation; for these are the clearest and best Notions that we have of a *Spirit*: And the Scripture itself frequently applies them all to God, and speaks of his Understanding, Will, and Power.

Yet still let us remember that we must conceive of these things in God in the highest and greatest Perfection possible, removing always from our Idea of God every thing that is Imperfect, and raising this Idea infinitely above every Power and Quality that is in our own Souls. He hath *infinite Wisdom*, or Understanding,



derstanding, to know, contrive, and decree all his Works, and *infinite Power* to execute and effect his Decrees. Every thing in God transcends the highest Conceptions of Man.

*Prop. II.* There is but one only, the living and the true God. There is but one Godhead, one Divinity; for since God is the first, the greatest, and the best of Beings, there can be but one that is the very *first*, the very greatest, and the very best.

Besides, God is a *self-sufficient* Being, and can want nothing from another, *Acts xvii. 25.* he is an *all-sufficient* Being, and can do every thing of himself, *Job xlii. 2.* and therefore he cannot possibly stand in need of any other Being beside himself. Within himself the one God possesses all possible Perfection.

Two such *all-sufficient* Beings could do no more than one could do, either with Regard to their own Blessedness, or with Regard to Creatures; for if two could make each other more blessed, or do any thing more toward Creatures than one could do, then each of them alone could not be *self-sufficient*, nor *all-sufficient*; each of them could not be a *God*, if they could want any Help from another.

Thence it follows, that there cannot be two Gods; for since each of them must be *self-sufficient*, i. e. sufficient for himself, and *all-sufficient*, i. e. sufficient for all other Purposes whatsoever, one of these two Gods would be utterly needless and useless: But it is absurd to imagine that a God is an useless or needless Being; therefore there can be no other God but one.

This is the great and universal Dictate of the Light of Nature, and this is the constant Doctrine of Scripture in the Old and New Testament: And indeed, this *Unity of the Godhead* is a peculiar Glory of all the Religions that God hath given to Men, and whereby they are distinguished from the false Religions of the *Heathen* Nations, who did generally profess more Gods than one. God hath always taken Care to secure to himself an unrivall'd Dignity and

Majesty in all his Dispensations. This is the Language of God by *Moses*, *Hear, O Israel, the Lord thy God is one Lord*, Deut. vi. 4. And *Christ* confirms this Doctrine most abundantly in the New Testament, and that in the very same Words, *Mark* xii. 29. And he commends the Scribe for affirming, *There is one God, and there is no other but he*. This is the Foundation and Basis of all that can be called *true Religion* in every Nation, and in every Age since the World began. And when a Multitude of Nations had lost this Doctrine of the *one God*, and fell into the Worship of many whom they called *Gods*, it was one great Design of *Christianity*, to destroy *Polytheism* (or the Doctrine of many Gods) among the Nations of the World, and to reduce them more universally to that ancient and eternal Truth, which some of their own Philosophers professed, (*viz.*) that there is *but one true God*.

*Prop. III.* This one God hath revealed himself by the Light of Nature as well as by Scripture, to be the first Cause of all Things in Heaven and Earth, visible and invisible, the Creator and Governor, the original Possessor and the sovereign Lord of all other Beings whatsoever. And as he is the original Lord of all, he requires the Worship and Homage of all his intelligent Creatures: He demands holy Obedience to his Laws, and humble Submission to his Providences; and upon this Account even some of the Ancients by the Light of Nature have called him, *Father of all*.

*Prop. IV.* The great God hath more clearly made himself known in his Word under the *personal and relative* Character of a *Father*, i. e. as a Person bearing the Relation of a *Father*, and that not only to Angels and Men who are called the *Sons of God*, but he is a Father also to our Lord *Jesus Christ* himself, tho' in a far more excellent and superior Way, for *Christ* is the *only begotten Son*. Yet it may be noted that God is never called the *Father* of the *Holy Ghost*.  
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Under this *personal* Character of the *Father*, the great God appears in Scripture as the prime Agent and Ruler in all the Kingdoms of Nature, and Grace, and Glory: The *Father* is eminently *Lord of Heaven and Earth*, as *Christ* himself calls him\*. He sustains the Dignity and Majesty of Godhead, and maintains the divine Rights and Prerogatives of it in Heaven, Earth and Hell.

It is under this *personal* Character that he appears in my Text as that *God and Father* who receives the Homage and Worship of sinful Men, returning and approaching to him through *Jesus Christ* his Son, and by his *Holy Spirit*.

*Prop. V.* God the *Father* is reveal'd in Scripture as transacting his Affairs that relate to his Creatures through *Jesus Christ* his Son, and by his *Holy Spirit*. 'Tis by his Son *he made the Worlds*, Heb. i. 2. It is by his Spirit *he formed the Host of Heaven*, Psal. xxxiii. 6. It is by his Spirit *he renews the Face of the Earth*, and covers it with living Creatures, Psal. civ. It is by his Son *he redeems sinful Mankind* 'from Hell, and by his Spirit *he sanctifies them* and makes them fit for Heaven.

*Note*, the *Son of God* is sometimes called the *Word of God*, and God is said to act by his *Word* as well as by his *Son* †.

These are the *blessed Three* who by the Christian Church for many Ages have been call'd the *Holy Trinity*. The clear and distinct Revelation of them

\* Matt. xi. 25. *Jesus said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of Heaven and Earth; ver. 27. All Things are delivered to me of my Father.*

† I do not here assert any thing, or make any Enquiries, whether or how far the Idea of the *Word of God* may differ from the Idea of the *Son of God*, because this has been controverted among orthodox Writers. 'Tis very plain and certain that both these Names belong to *Jesus Christ*, the second Person in the sacred Trinity; and this is sufficient for my present Purpose, since I design to avoid all particular Controversies about Modes of Explication in this Place.

and their various Offices to us in the Gospel is the chief Glory of the Christian Religion, and therefore we are initiated or admitted into the Profession of this Religion by being baptized into the *Name* of the sacred Three, *the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.*

Having survey'd the scriptural Representations of *God the Father*, in the foregoing Propositions, let us now consider what is the first, the most plain and obvious manner wherein the Scripture represents to us the *Son of God* and the *Spirit of God*, and by degrees rise up to the several and more compleat Descriptions of them in the Bible.

*Prop. VI.* The *Son of God* is spoken of generally in the New Testament as a very glorious Person, who was some way *begotten of the Father*, i. e. derived from *God the Father*, or hath some special Relation to him as an *only begotten Son*, John i. 18. as the *first begotten of God*, Heb. i. 6. as the *first born of every Creature*, Col. i. 15. *who was with God*, and *had Glory with the Father before the World was*, John xvii. 5. *By whom God made the Worlds, and created all Things, visible and invisible*, Col. i. 16. Heb. i. 2, 3. *who came forth from the Father, and came into this World*, John xvi. 28. *who took Flesh and Blood upon him* Seventeen hundred Years ago, Heb. ii. 14. and thus was *made of a Woman*, Gal. iv. *was born of the Virgin Mary* in an extraordinary manner, without an earthly Father, Luke i. 35. and was for this reason also called the *Son of God*, who lived above thirty Years a Man among Men, taught divine Doctrine here on Earth, and wrought various divine Wonders to confirm it, was crucify'd by the *Jews and Romans*, rose again from the Dead, *left this World, and ascended to his Father and our Father, to his God and our God*, John xx. 17.

*Prop. VII.* As this Description raises *Jesus Christ* far above the Dignity of Angels, and carries something divine in it, so there are several express Ascriptions of *true and proper Divinity or Godhead* to him.

This



This glorious Person, *Jesus*, the Son of God, hath divine Names, Titles, Attributes, Operations, and Worship ascribed to him, even such whereby God the Father himself is known and distinguished to be the *true God*, &c.

Is the *Father* call'd the *Lord our God* often in Scripture? So *Thomas* calls *Christ*, *My Lord*, and *my God*, John xx. 28. Is the *Father* called the *First and the Last*, Isa. xlv. 6. So is the *Son*, Rev. i. 17. and xxi. 13. Is the *Father* called *Jehovah*, the *mighty God*, and *God blessed for ever*? So is *Christ*, Jer. xxiii. 6. Isa. ix. 6. Rom. ix. 5. *Christ* is that *Jehovah* whom all the *Angels of God* must worship, Psal. xcvi. 17. compared with Heb. i. 6. *Christ* is that *God*, that *Jehovah*, who laid the *Foundation of the Earth*, and the *Heavens are the Work of his Hand*, Heb. i. 10, 12. compared with Psal. cii. 22, 25. He is that *Lord and God* who ascended on high, and led *Captivity captive*, Psal. lxxviii. 18. compared with Eph. iv. 8. He is that *Jehovah* on whose *Name those who call shall be delivered*, or *saved*, Joel ii. 32. compar'd with Rom. x. 13.

These and many other Scriptures prove that *Jesus Christ* may be properly called *true God*: For our *God is a jealous God*, jealous of his Honour and divine Prerogatives, Exod. xxxiv. 14. *Jehovah is his Name*, and he will not give his *Name and Glory*, his peculiar Titles and Attributes, to another, Isa. xlii. 8. Therefore since *Christ* the Son of God has these divine Names, Titles, and Glories attributed to him, he must have *true Godhead* belonging to him also.

*Prop. VIII.* Thus the Son of God plainly appears to be a complex Person, who has two distinct Natures united in him, (*viz.*) *God and Man*: And under this Character he is several Times represented in Scripture in the Old and New Testament. He is the *Child who is born*, and yet the *mighty God*, Isa. ix. 6. He is the *righteous Branch of David*, whose Name is *Jehovah our Righteousness*, &c. Jer. xxiii. 5, 6.

He is *Emmanuel*, or God with us, *Matt. i. 23.* He is the *Word* who was with God, who was God, and was made *Flesh*, *John i. 1, 14.* He is God (even the living God) manifest in the *Flesh*, who was taken up in Glory, *1 Tim. iii. 15, 16.* He is a Man, in whom dwells all the Fulness of the Godhead bodily, *Col. ii. 9. a Man of the Seed of David, and yet God over all, blessed for ever, Rom. ix. 5.* True God and true Man are united in this wondrous Person, as one complex Principle of Doing and Suffering: And thereby he is divinely fitted for those blessed Offices which he sustains, the Work which he performs, and the Worship which he receives. God redeemed his Church with his own Blood: Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive Glory and Blessing, *Acts xx. 28. Rev. v. 12.*

This is the most plain and clear Account which the Scripture gives us of *Christ the Son of God.* Now let us enquire what is the most easy and obvious Notion of the blessed Spirit in Scripture.

*Prop. IX.* The Spirit of God seems to be most usually represented in the Old Testament and in the New, as a distinct eternal essential Principle in the Godhead\*, even as the Spirit of a Man is a natural essential Principle in Man. This is the Comparison used in Scripture, *1 Cor. ii. 11. As none knows the Things of a Man save the Spirit of a Man which is in him, even so the Things of God knoweth none but the Spirit of God.* A Number of other Texts seems to conspire in this Representation, *Psal. cxxxix. 7. Whither shall I go from thy Spirit, whither shall I flee from thy Presence?* where the Term Spirit, signifies God himself, or a distinct Principle in the divine Essence. *Psal. cvi. 33. The Children of Israel provoked his Spirit, Isa. lxi. 10. They rebelled and vexed his holy Spirit,*

\* The pious and venerable Dr. Owen, in his Discourse of the *Doctrine of the Trinity*, makes no Scruple to use the Term, *Distinct Principles of Operation*, and represents them as *subsisting in one Godhead, in the same divine Essence or Being*; and this he does in several Places of that Discourse.

even as the Spirit of a Prince is provoked and vexed by the Rebellion of his Subjects. So *Eph. iv. 30. Grieve not the holy Spirit of God whereby ye are sealed, Zach. vi. 8. These have quieted my Spirit in the North Country, &c.*

As the *Spirit of a Man* or of any living Creature, does not imply another Being derived from that Creature, but a natural Principle of Operation in the very Essence of that Creature, and whereby that Creature acts, so the *holy Spirit* is generally called the *Spirit of God*, not to denote another inferior Being derived from God, but some eternal glorious Principle in the very Essence of God, some Principle in, and of the true and eternal Godhead, by which God operates. So *Psal. xxxiii. 6. The Hosts of Heaven are formed by the Breath (or Spirit) of God. Job xxvi. 13. By his Spirit he garnished the Heavens. Psal. li. 12. David* prays that God would uphold him by his free Spirit. *Rom. viii. 11. God shall quicken your mortal Bodies (that is, raise you from the Dead) by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.* Thus God createth the World, and raiseth the Dead by his Spirit, as an Almighty Principle of Operation\*.

*Prop. X.* This divine Principle, the *Spirit of God*, is sometimes represented in a *personal* Manner, as a *divine Person* or *sovereign* intelligent Agent, even as

\* It might be added, perhaps, under this Proposition, that when the *Spirit of God* is represented as speaking or acting in Believers, he seems to be described as the *Spirit of the Father*, or a divine Almighty Principle really belonging to God, which operates in them, but is entirely distinct and different from their own Spirits, so *Matt. x. 20. It is not you that speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaketh in you.* 'Tis this same Spirit of God which taught their Tongues to speak strange Languages, and wrought Miracles by their Lips and their Hands. 'Tis manifested as a divine Principle of Agency speaking and acting in them, infinitely different from all their own human Principles of Acting: This appear'd eminently in the primitive and inspired Christians, and in the ancient Prophets; they were acted as by another Spirit, or a divine active Principle, distinct from, and vastly superior to their own.

the true eternal God himself with divine Names, Titles, Attributes, &c. So *the Spirit of a Man*, though it be but one distinct Principle in Man, yet is sometimes represented as the *Man himself*: And this is very common in the *Hebrew* Idiom, and sometimes in other Languages. There are several Instances of this Representation of the Spirit of God in Scripture. Is God the *Father the God of Israel*? And is not the *holy Spirit* so too? 2 Sam. xxiii. 2, 3. *The Spirit of Jehovah spake by me, the God of Israel said.* The Holy Ghost is that *Jehovah* who was tempted by the *Jews in the Wilderness*: Compare *Psal.* xcv. 3. with *Heb.* iii. 7, 8, 9. He is that *God* that dwells in the *Saints as in his Temple*, 1 Cor. iii. 16, 17. and vi. 19. He is that *God* to whom *Ananias* told a *Lye*, Acts v. 3, 4. *Thou hast not lyed unto Men, but unto God.* He is that divine Person, who said, *Separate me Paul and Barnabas for the Work whereunto I have called them*, Acts xiii. 2. He is that divine Agent, who sent *Peter* to *Cornelius*, Acts x. 20. *The Spirit said to him, Behold two Men seek thee, go with them, for I have sent them\**.

Here note, That there are some Places of Scripture, wherein it is pretty difficult to determine, whether the holy Spirit be represented as the *sovereign divine Agent*, i. e. God himself; or, as a *distinct Principle in the Godhead*, by which God the Father acts. And upon this Account, some Texts may be fairly interpreted both Ways without any Inconvenience: Yet in other Places, this Distinction is plainly observ'd, as may appear by several of these Scriptures which I have cited.

*Prop. XI.* Sometimes this divine Principle, the *holy Spirit*, is represented in a *personal Manner*, but in a subordinate Character, and as a Person more

\* Here I take Occasion to correct a Mistake of my Memory, in my last *Dissertations on the Trinity*, page 196. where I did not remember that the Pronoun *I*, was apply'd to the Holy Spirit, in the New Testament.

directly



directly acting according to the Oeconomy of the Gospel. Then he is set forth, not only as *proceeding*\* *from the Father*, but he is described also as *sent both by the Father and the Son*, to perform various Offices and Operations in the World, and especially in the Church: *John xv. 26. When the Comforter is come whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of Truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me.* And tho' under this Idea in the Christian Oeconomy, the *Spirit* is represented in a subordinate Manner, yet in his divine Nature or Godhead, he is truly, essentially and eternally One with God the Father.

If this Proposition does not give full Satisfaction concerning the Representation of the *holy Spirit* in a subordinate Manner in some Scriptures, perhaps, the next Proposition may relieve those Difficulties.

*Prop. XII.* The Term *Spirit* and *holy Spirit* in Scripture, does not always signify the *divine Agent* himself, but sometimes it means his *Gifts, Graces, and Influences*: Nor is this at all strange, for *Jesus Christ* himself is called the *Word of God*, because he reveals the Will of God to Men; and yet the very Laws and Revelations which God hath given to Men by *Jesus Christ*, are sometimes also called the *Word of God*; so, though the *Spirit of God* himself distributes Gifts, and Graces, and divine Influences among Men, yet these very Gifts, and Graces, and divine Influences which are given by the *Spirit*, are also sometimes called the *holy Spirit*. This has been always granted by our best Writers.

\* I do not here enter into that Question, whether the holy Spirit, consider'd in his own divine Essence or Subsistence, is derived from the Father, or from the Son, or both? But I content myself here to declare, that as to the Oeconomy of the Gospel, and the Manner of Operation, the *Spirit proceeds from the Father*, and is *sent both by the Father and the Son*. This is plain Scripture, and beyond all Dispute.

And perhaps, this may be the Meaning of that Term, in some of those Places of Scripture, where the Spirit is said to be *poured out upon Men*, to be *shed down* on the Apostles, to be *given* to Believers by *laying on the Hands of the Apostles*, where Men are said to have a *Portion of the Spirit*, whether greater or less, or *double*; or perhaps, where *the Spirit is said to be*, or *not to be given by Measure*, or where Persons are said to be *filled* or *anointed with the Spirit*. Perhaps, I say, some of these scriptural Phrases may be better explained concerning the *Gifts, Graces, and Influences* of the holy Spirit, than concerning the *divine Agent* himself, who is true God. It seems to be much more proper to say, *divine Influences are shed down, poured out, and given to Men, by laying on of Hands, &c.* than to say, that the true God himself is *shed down, is poured out, or is given to some Men by other Mens laying Hands upon them*; or than to say, *we are anointed with God, or God is given, or not given by Measure, &c.\**

\* There are several other Scriptures that confirm this Proposition. 'Tis evident that it was the *Holy Spirit* by which *Elijah* spoke and acted, and yet 'tis called the *Spirit of Elijah*, i. e. his *Gifts*, 2 *Kings* ii. 9, 15. 'Tis the *Holy Spirit* by which the *Corinthians* spake, yet it is called the *Spirits of the Prophets*, and these are said to be *subject to the Prophets*, 1 *Cor.* xiv. 32. which would hardly be said concerning the divine Agent, or God himself. See *Pool's* Annotat.

This Proposition does by no means deny or diminish the Truth and Glory of the *Spirit of God* dwelling eminently in the human Nature of *Christ* (who was *anointed and filled with the Spirit*) and subordinately in every true Christian: For God himself is said to dwell in his People as in his Temple, and the *Spirit of God* dwells in them, and abides with them for ever, *John* xiv. 16, 17. For he that hath not the *Spirit of Christ*, he is none of his, *Rom.* viii. 9. But this Proposition relieves those harsh and unwarrantable Expressions of being *anointed with God, of receiving a double Portion of God, of God being shed or poured down on Men*, which would be the plain Consequence of interpreting such Scriptures concerning the divine Agent himself, or the *Holy Spirit*, who is true God; and for that Reason our Divines have generally thought it proper and necessary to interpret many of these Expressions rather concerning the *Gifts, Graces, and Influences of the Spirit*.

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This has been the general Sense of all our Divines in this Matter, and I thought it necessary to insert this *Proposition* here, that it might more evidently appear, that though in some Scriptures the Term *Spirit* and *Holy Spirit*, may signify his *Gifts, Graces and Influences*, yet this does not at all derogate from the true and eternal Godhead, which is plainly ascribed to the *Holy Spirit* in other Places.

Here *note*, Though 'tis hard to determine always with certainty, when the *Holy Ghost*, or *Spirit of God* signifies the *divine Agent* himself, and when it denotes *his Influences*; yet there are some Texts wherein the Sense is plain and evident.

*Prop. XIII.* Tho' the *Son* and *Spirit* are true God as well as the *Father*, yet all our Divines universally acknowledge, that the Language of Scripture seems to ascribe some sort of peculiar Eminence or special Prerogative to the *Father*, in such Respects as these.

1. The *Father* (as I hinted before) is always represented as the first and chief Agent in Creation, in Providence, and in the Affairs of Salvation; the *Father* is described and exhibited as acting by *his Son*, (or *Word*) and by *his Spirit*, as sending them, and employing or using them as *Mediums* of his Agency: Whereas the *Son* and *Spirit* are never represented as chief Agents in Comparison with the *Father*; nor are they said in this Manner to act by the *Father*, or to send, or use and employ him as such a Medium of their Acting.

2. When the Name of *God* is used *absolutely* in Scripture, it generally relates to the *Father*. This appears in innumerable Instances: As for Example, where *Christ* is called the *Son of God*, the Word *God* plainly signifies the *Father*; where *God* is spoken of as transacting any Thing relating to *Christ* his *Son*, or to the *Holy Spirit*, it means generally, if not always, the *Father*: And indeed, this Idea of *God*, as the *Father* or prime Agent, is much the most frequent

quent and general Sense of the Word *God*, in the Old and New Testament, as all Men confess.

3. The *Father* is described as *the only true God*, as *the one God even the Father*, and that in such Scriptures where the *Son* or *Spirit* are named and plainly distinguished from him, *John* xvii. 3. *Christ* saith to his Father, *This is Life Eternal to know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent*, *Eph.* iv. 6. *There is one Body, one Spirit, one Lord, one God and Father of all.* *1 Cor.* viii. 6. *To us there is but one God the Father, of whom are all things, and one Lord Jesus, by whom are all things.*

*Prop.* XIV. Since *there is but one God, even the Father*, according to *St. Paul*, and since the *Father* is *the only true God*, according to *Christ's* own Expression, then the *Son* and *Spirit* cannot have another or a different Godhead from that of the *Father*: But since the *Son* and *Spirit* also are *true God*, it must be by some Communion in the same true Godhead which belongs to the *Father*: For if it were another Godhead, that would make another God; and thus the Christian Religion would have two or three Gods, which is contrary to the whole Tenor of the Gospel\*.

This

\* Here let it be observ'd, that I do not enter into that Question, Whether the Godhead which is ascribed to the *Son*, does always signify the *full, compleat, and adequate* Idea of the Godhead which is in the *Father*; or whether in some Scriptures it may mean only an *inadequate* Idea of Godhead, which may be supposed to be called the *Word* or the *Wisdom* of God; or whether it be not rather the intire Godhead under the special Idea of *Wisdom*: For I would not enter into any particular Schemes of Explication in this Sermon: But in general, 'tis evident from Scripture that the Godhead of *Christ*, and that of the *Father*, must be one and the same Godhead, since there are not two Deities.

Let it be observed again, that supposing the Godhead of the *Father* and the *Son*, to be the very same, then though the *Father* has the *only true Godhead* in him, the *Son* and *Spirit* are not excluded from a Communion therein. For thus it may be made to appear, that though the *Father* be called the *only true God*, *John* xvii. 3.

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This might be proved from many Scriptures and many Reasonings drawn from Scripture: I shall mention two or three of them.

1. *Christ* himself saith, *John x. 30. I and my Father are One*, i. e. One in divine Power and Godhead, as the Context leads us to expound it: And this has been the most general Sense of all our *Trinitarian* Writers. 1 *John v. 7. The Apostle* saith, *There are three that bear Record in Heaven, the Father, the Word and the Spirit, and these Three are One*; which is usually explain'd, these Three are one in Deity, or have one and the same Godhead. Nor do I know any better Exposition.

2. The Godhead of the *Father*, and the Godhead of the *Spirit*, is the very same Godhead which is in *Christ*, and which wrought his Miracles. *John xiv. 10. I am in the Father, and the Father is in me: It is the Father that dwelleth in me, he doth the Works*, i. e. the Godhead of the *Father*. *Matt. xii. 28. Jesus by the Spirit of God cast out Devils.* Now if there were any other distinct Godhead in the *Son*, besides the Godhead of the *Father*, or of the *Spirit*, it seems to be somewhat strange and unaccountable that the Miracles of *Christ* should never be plainly ascribed to that peculiar distinct Godhead of the *Son*, but that Scripture should so often tell us, he wrought his Miracles by the *Holy Spirit*, or by the Aid of his *Father*. I think therefore, it must at least imply thus much, that the Godhead of the *Father*, the *Son*, and the *Spirit*, is but one and the same Godhead. And 'tis this same one Godhead, or divine Essence, that is united personally to the Man *Jesus Christ*, and wrought his Miracles: It is the same Godhead that subsists in the *Father*, and in the

the *Son* and *Spirit* may be *true God* also; yet, perhaps, this Text might receive a much clearer Explication, by applying some particular Scheme in order to interpret it, but this is not my present Work.

*Son,*

*Son*, whatsoever personal Distinctions are between them, which shall be consider'd immediately.

3. Many of those Scriptures in the Old Testament, which apparently refer to *God the Father*, i.e. to the great God, considered and exhibited as the prime Creator and Lord of all, the God of *Abraham*, *Isaac* and *Jacob*; I say, many of these very Scriptures are ascribed to *Christ* in the New Testament, and interpreted concerning *Christ*; particularly in *Rom. x. Rom. xiv. Ephes. iv. Phil. ii. Heb. i.* which I think could not be a just Interpretation, if the Godhead of *Christ*, and the Godhead of the *Father*, were not one and the same Godhead.

I add after all, This hath been the common and general Sense of all our Protestant Divines at Home and Abroad, *That the Godhead of the Father, Son, and Spirit, is but one and the same Godhead, or divine Essence.*

*Prop. XV.* Yet there is a plain Distinction held forth in Scripture, between the *sacred Three*, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, as I have already declared; even so plain and strong, as that they are all several Times represented in a *personal* Manner, and are spoken of as *three distinct Persons*\*, who have different Works or Offices, attributed and assigned to them.

The *Father* is represented as the prime Agent in our Creation, and Redemption, our Sanctification, and Salvation: It was he sent his Son *Jesus Christ* to redeem and save us from Hell: It is he sends his

\* Though they are generally call'd *three distinct Persons* by our Divines, yet there are no Writers either Abroad or at Home, that ever pretended this to be the express Language of Scripture: And there are very few, if any, of our most orthodox Writers, who ever supposed the Word *Person*, was to be taken here in the full, common, and literal Sense of it, for a *distinct conscious Being*; but only in a *qualify'd and restrain'd Sense*, or a Sense that is analogous or a-kin to the common Meaning of it among Men: For *three distinct Persons* in the common and literal Sense of it, would be three distinct Spirits, which very few *Trinitarians* allow.

*Holy Spirit* to enlighten, sanctify, and comfort us, and to prepare us for Heaven.

The *Son* is represented as sent by the *Father* into this World, to take our Flesh and Blood upon him, that he might die to redeem us: He becomes our Prophet, our Priest, and our King, to compleat our Salvation: He sends the *Holy Spirit* from the *Father* to dwell in his People.

The *Holy Spirit* is represented as sent by the *Father* and the *Son*, to confirm the Truth of the Gospel, to guide us into all Truth, to change our sinful Natures into Holiness, and to witness with our Spirits, that we are the Children of God: He is expressly called a *Witnesser*, and a *Comforter* or *Advocate*.

*Prop. XVI.* Upon the whole it appears, that there is, and there must be, some real Union and Communion in Godhead between the sacred Three, the *Father*, the *Son*, and the *Holy Spirit*, to answer and support the divine Names, Titles, and Attributes, &c. which are ascribed to them all: And there is, and there must be, some sufficient Distinction between them, to sustain these distinct *personal* Characters and Offices, and to answer to these distinct Representations of Scripture: Tho' how far this *Oneness of Godhead*, and this *personal Distinction* extend, may not be easy for us to find out exactly, and to describe to the Understanding and Satisfaction of our Fellow-Christians.

This is that very Question which has so much difficulty in it to answer: This has been the hard Problem of Christianity, in almost all Ages, how to reconcile and adjust this Article: This has been the solemn Labour of our several *Schemes* and *Hypotheses*, wherein some of us would be glad to arrive at clearer Conceptions, by a farther Search of the holy Scriptures. But among the many Attempts that have been made to adjust this Matter, there is not one which is universally approved.

*Prop.*

*Prop. XVII.* Tho', perhaps, we may not find nor determine clearly and precisely, how far the sacred Three are the same as to their *Oneness of Godhead*, nor how far they are *different* as to their *distinct personal Characters*; yet it is our Duty to honour them, according to the Revelation which Scripture hath made, *i. e.* we must pay all of them divine Honours, since they have communion in Godhead; and we must transact our important Affairs of Salvation with them, according to their distinct Offices, as our Father, our Saviour, and our Sanctifier.

Thus I have given a plain scriptural Account of the Doctrine of the *Trinity*, without entring into those particular Explications, whereby *Trinitarian* Writers have unhappily divided themselves into several contending Parties. And I have done my Endeavour to express what appears to be the first, the most plain, and obvious Representation of Things in Scripture, and that so inoffensively to my Brethren, who own and believe this Doctrine, that I am persuaded there have been but few *Trinitarians* these hundred Years past, who would deny any one of all these Propositions: Nor am I conscious to my self, that I have ever written any thing inconsistent with them, in any of my Discourses on this divine Subject.

[ *Here is a proper Division of this Sermon into two Parts.* ]

The second Thing contain'd in the Text, is, the *important Use of this great Doctrine of the Trinity*, and that is, *We have access to the Father thro' the Son by the Spirit.*

I shall not stand here to debate, whether *the access which we have to the Father* in my Text, refers to any particular Act of Worship, or to our general return to God from a state of Sin, Guilt, and Distance.

The



The Text is a divine Truth in both these Senses; But since it seems to be the chief Design of the whole Chapter, to shew the Way of our return to the Favour of God, and a State of Peace and Friendship with him, since we are said to be *brought near to God by the Blood of Christ*, ver. 13. I suppose it cannot be improper to take this Verse in the same extensive Sense\*. But if the Apostle should mean *our Access to God in particular Acts of Worship*, here in my Text, yet I am sure this glorious Sentence is justly applicable to the general Access of a Sinner to God, and his Introduction into a State of divine Favour: For it must be confest, that our *first general return to God* from a State of Sin, and *all our gradual Advances to greater Nearness*, must be still expected and obtain'd *through Christ, and by the Holy Spirit*.

Here let us consider the different *Stations or Characters*, in which the *sacred Three* are represented in this great and important Concern of our Salvation, and at the End of each Representation, I shall shew briefly, what our *Duties* are to the *sacred Three* in our Approaches to God, correspondent to the Stations in which the Gospel places them.

I. God, the great *God and Father* of all is here represented as sustaining the Majesty of Godhead, as the sovereign Lord and Governor of his Creatures, and my Text compared with the foregoing Verses, discovers him to us in these four Views.

1. As *offended with his Creature Man*, on the Account of Sin, ver. 3. for *we are by Nature the Children of his Wrath*, we are Strangers and Enemies in our

\* I might take Notice here; in order to confirm my extensive Sense of the Text, that the Word *Access*, in one or more Copies, is εἰρήνη, *Peace*: And the Inference which the Apostle makes in the next Verse, *Therefore ye are no more Strangers and Foreigners*, is very naturally drawn from our Access to God, as a State of Peace with God, but not from a particular Act of Worship.

*Minds, and by wicked Works, Col. i. We are afar off from God, without God, and without Hope in the World, Eph. ii. 12. Tho' this be spoken particularly of the Ephesian Idolaters, yet in a sense it is true of every Man in a state of Nature.*

2. *God appears willing to be reconciled, ready to receive us upon our return to him, in this Chapter. In other places of Scripture he is represented sitting on a Throne of Grace, approachable by sinful Creatures; and this is sufficiently imply'd in ver. 4. He is rich in Mercy, and has loved us with great love.*

3. *He has appointed his own beloved Son Jesus Christ to be the Reconciler. We are utterly unworthy of his Favour or Love; nor will a holy God suffer guilty Creatures to come near him, without a proper and honourable Mediator; and since we could not provide ourselves with such a Friend, he has appointed his own Son to that Office: God hath set him forth to be a Propitiation.*

4. *He makes us willing to be reconciled: He saves us by Free-Grace, and when he has ordain'd Faith to be the Way of our Return to him, he works that Faith in us by his own Spirit, ver. 8. By Grace ye are saved through Faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the Gift of God.*

Let us consider now, what are our Duties according to this Representation of the Character which *God the Father* sustains here. From all these things it plainly follows, that in our religious Transactions we are eminently to look to *God the Father*, as the Person, who is our original Maker, Lord, and Sovereign, whose Laws we have broken, whose Anger we have incurr'd, and from whom we have separated ourselves by Sin: We are to seek Peace with him, and Reconciliation to him. We must return to him as our rightful Lord, and address ourselves to him by humble Repentance, as sitting on the Throne of Majesty, and vindicating the Rights of Godhead: To him we must pray and apply our  
selves

selves eminently to him as the first Spring of Mercy; the Author of all Grace, and ascribe to him the Glory of his condescending Wisdom and Love; we must offer him our Thanks and Praises that he is willing to be reconciled, that he has sent his Son to be the Reconciler, and appointed a Way of Reconciliation. This is the general Current of Scripture-Language, both in Precept and in Example: and the Chapter where my Text is, as well as the whole Epistle, plainly leads us to this Practice.

II. We come next to enquire more particularly, how *Christ* the Son of God is represented as the *Medium*; through whom *we have Access to the Father*; for our Reconciliation is attributed to him, *He is our Peace*, ver. 14. Now *Christ* becomes our Mediator of Reconciliation eminently these five Ways.

1. By his *Incarnation*; i. e. *By taking our Flesh and Blood upon him*: And thus he became a Man amongst Men: The Son of God, who is *one with the Father* in Godhead, became *one with us* in human Nature. *The Word who was God, and who was with God, the same Word was made Flesh and dwelt with us*, John i. 1, 14. When he became *Emmanuel*, God with us, he did not only unite God and Man in his own Person, but since he came *in the Likeness of sinful Flesh*, Rom. viii. 3. he did, as it were, exemplify an Union of Peace and Reconciliation between a holy God and sinful Man. His very Incarnation gave us a Pledge of that Friendship which he came to restore between God the Creator and his guilty Creatures, who were before at Enmity, and Strangers, both by the Apostacy of our first Parents, and our own continued Rebellions.

2. *Christ came to reconcile us to God, by fulfilling perfect Obedience to the Law which we had broken, and by sustaining the Punishment and Death which was due to our Sins.* This we could never suffer, and out-live the Suffering; for the broken Law threatned Death,

but provided no Resurrection. *Christ Jesus* the Son of God, taking Flesh and Blood upon him, took our Sins also, and became a Sacrifice for Sin; *he bare our Sins in his Body on the cursed Tree*, and by his Blood has made compleat Atonement for Sin; has repaired the Honour of the Law, and Government of God which he had highly dishonoured; and thus he has made a Way for the Exercise of the Mercy and Forgiveness of God, without any Disgrace to his governing Justice; and has laid an happy Foundation for our Approach to *God the Father*, though we are by Nature Strangers and Rebels, guilty and condemned.

3. *Christ ascended to Heaven to present his own Sacrifice before the Throne of God*, even as the High-Priest under the *Jewish Dispensation*, went into the *Holy of Holies*, to present the Blood of the Sacrifice of Atonement, and sprinkle it before the Mercy-Seat. This was the chief Glory and Perfection of the Priesthood of *Aaron*, and according to the Apostle's Reasonings in the Epistle to the *Hebrews*, Chap. vii, viii, ix. This seems to be the ultimate Glory and Perfection of the Priesthood of *Christ*, (*viz.*) his *Entrance into Heaven with his own Blood, thence to appear in the Presence of God for us*, Heb. ix. 11, 12, 24. There he presents himself, not only *as the Lamb that has been slain*, but he appears in his own pure and perfect mediatorial Righteousness before God, in the Name of sinful Man, as *Aaron* the High-Priest, in the Name of the People of *Israel*, appeared in the most holy Place before God, not only with the Blood of Atonement in his Hand, but with *Holiness to the Lord* inscribed on the Mitre on his Forehead, *Exod. xxviii. 36*. God the Father beholds his only begotten Son there, as the great Representative of all his Children: He beholds his own Law satisfy'd and fulfilled in his perfect Obedience even to Death; and this is an everlasting Foundation for Reconciliation and Peace between God and Sinners.

4. *Christ*



4. *Christ lives for ever to intercede for sinful Man, to plead with God for Mercy to his guilty Creatures.* Perhaps, in the Nature of Things, this is not much different from the former Particular; for his presenting of his Sacrifice as for ever fresh in the Virtue of it before the Father, is a sort of *Intercession*. His Blood has a *Voice* in it, and his very Appearance there is a powerful Pleading. But however, since the High-Priest of old, not only presented the *atoning Blood*, but also offer'd *Incense* in the *Holy of Holies*, which is a Type of *Intercession*, we may properly enough make some Distinction between them, and represent these two Transactions of Christ as our High-Priest in a distinct Light. *He is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him, since he lives for ever to make Intercession for them,* Heb. vii. 25.

5. He is represented as dwelling in Heaven, as our great High Priest, not only to *present our Services, our Prayers, and our Praises to God, and make them acceptable to the Father* through his infinite Merit, notwithstanding all their Imperfections, but also to *introduce our departing Souls into the Presence of God without Spot or Blemish, and to present his whole Church at the great Day, before his own and his Father's Glory, with exceeding Joy.* See Eph. v. 27. Jude 14. This is the last great Act of his mediatorial Office, and by this we obtain a full and compleat *Access to God*, to dwell with him for ever in the Regions of Light and Joy.

Now let us consider, how we ought to regulate our Practice in our return from Sin, and our Approaches to God in a Correspondency with these Instances of the *Mediation of Christ*.

From this Account of Things it follows, that whensoever we sinful and guilty Creatures address ourselves to God the Father, it must be done in and by the Name and Interest of Jesus Christ, as our only Mediator. We must humbly ask Forgiveness

of our Sins, for the Sake of the Sufferings of the Son of God; we must depend entirely for our Acceptance with the Father, on the Virtue of his perfect Obedience even to Death; and entreat of the Father, that he would be reconciled to us upon the Account of his own Son *Jesus*, utterly disclaiming all Merit and Worthiness of our own, renouncing all other Saviours, and all other Hopes, for *Christ* alone is the Way to God; *no Man cometh to the Father but by Me*, John xiv. 6.

We must give Thanks to the Son of God for his amazing Condescension to take our Nature on him, and dwell in Flesh and Blood; and for his voluntary Submission to Death, to redeem such guilty Creatures as we are. We must trust in him for compleat Salvation both from Sin and Hell, and resign our selves as guilty, sinful, and perishing Creatures, into his Hands, and to his Methods of Relief. All our Prayers and acts of Worship and Obedience must be recommended to the Father by his Name, and through his Intercession.

After every fresh Instance of Sin, we must fly to him as our faithful Advocate in Heaven, and have daily Recourse to him, as our great Sacrifice, and our Mediator; because our Sins are daily renew'd in this imperfect State. In short, we must surrender ourselves up to him, that he may bring us as near to God, as this present State of Things will admit; and when we are dying, we must commit our departing Spirits to him as *Stephen* did, that he may present us to his Father, when we leave this sinful and wretched World. Thus we have Access to *God the Father*, by his *Son Jesus Christ*, who is our great Peace-Maker.

I grant that several other necessary Duties which we owe to *Christ* our Lord, might be mention'd in a more distinct and explicite Manner, (*viz.*) The acknowledging him as our *great Prophet*, receiving his divine Instructions with an humble Faith, and imita-

imitating his sacred *Example* with holy Care; the Submission to him as our *Lord and King*, yielding a ready and chearful Obedience to his Commands, and an humble Subjection to his providential Dispensations; to which I may add, depending on him for daily Grace, and the promised Aids of his blessed Spirit, as being appointed of the Father to bestow them; for he is *exalted to be a Prince* as well as a *Saviour*; and indeed Christ doth promote this great Work of the Salvation of Men, by his universal Government of the visible and invisible Worlds, with this View and Design, by giving and continuing his Gospel, to particular Nations, by sending forth his Ministers and Messengers, to invite Sinners to be reconciled to God, and by the Communications of his *Spirit* to Men: But these things do not appear directly to be the present View of the Apostle in my Text, while he is describing *Christ* as a *Medium* of our Access and Reconciliation to God, chiefly by his Death and its Influences. And as for the *Work of the Spirit*, that comes next in Course to be mention'd.

III. Having shewn the glorious Service which the *second Person* in the Holy Trinity performs for our Salvation, according to my Text, we come now to speak of the *Third*, i. e. the *blessed Spirit of God*, who is here represented as one who helps our Return or Access to God the *Father* through *Jesus Christ*, and this he does eminently in the Ways following.

1. *He convinces us of Sin.* He makes us see and feel our dreadful State of Wretchedness, because of our Guilt in the sight of God. Mankind by Nature are insensible of their own Misery, till the Spirit of God is sent to awaken them out of their dead Sleep, and make them look after a Reconciliation to the infinite Majesty of God, whom they have offended. 'Tis the powerful and inward Operation

of the Spirit that makes Sinners cry out, *What shall I do to be saved?*

2. *The Spirit discovers the Mercy of God the Father to us, and assures us that he is willing to be reconciled.* This he has done in the Word of the Gospel, and the Promises of Grace, which are written and recorded in the Bible by the holy Men whom he inspired; and this he reveals also with Power and Pleasure to the Mind of an awakened Sinner. Then the guilty Soul rejoices that *there is Forgiveness with God*, and conceives some Glimmerings of Hope.

3. 'Tis the Spirit who *effectually reveals Christ Jesus to the Soul as the great Reconciler.* He discovers who *Christ* is, and what he has done for us, and sets him before us in all the Glories of his Mediation. He makes the Soul see the All-sufficiency of his Sacrifice to atone for Sin, the Efficacy of his Intercession to prevail with God, and his Power to save to the uttermost. And all this is according to the Promise of Christ, *John xvi. He shall glorify me, for he shall take the things that are mine and shew them unto you:* All the Teachings of Men and all the Words in the Bible cannot make a sinful Creature see such Glory in Christ, such Grace, and so desirable a Salvation, as is done by the enlightning Work of the Holy Spirit.

4. It is the Holy Spirit *that makes us willing to return to God in this Way of his own Appointment.* 'Tis he that powerfully persuades and inclines us to part with every Sin. He works in the Heart of a Sinner holy Repentance for his past Follies, and renews and changes the corrupt Nature of Man. 'Tis he forms us after the Image of God, and gives us a new and divine Spirit and Temper. *That which is born of the Spirit is Spirit, John iii. 6.* He works Faith in us with Power, even that living Faith whereby we are interested in *Christ the Reconciler*, and which is the Spring of all Holiness. It is through the divine Operation of the Spirit of God on our Hearts that



we are taught to resign ourselves up to *Christ*, and to commit all our Concerns of Salvation into his Hands. Hereby we become Partakers of the Benefits of the Life and Death of *Christ* on Earth, and of his Intercession in Heaven; for it is the Appointment of God that *Faith in Christ* shall be our only Means of drawing near to the Father.

5. *The Holy Spirit preserves and carries on his own divine Work in the Soul.* What he begun in *Faith*, he carries on in *Love*: What he begun in Repentance, he carries on by daily Mortification of Sin. *Faith and Love are the Fruits of the Spirit*, Gal. v. 22. And it is by the Spirit that we must mortifie the Deeds of the Body if we would live, Rom. viii. 13. He sanctifies us more and more, and draws our Hearts still nearer to God. It is by the Sanctification of the Spirit and by the belief of the Truth that we are brought to partake of Salvation, 2 Thess. ii. 13. He restores us when we wander, and brings us back when we have gone astray: He fits us for Converse with God, and awakens every Grace which he has wrought in us into proper and seasonable Exercise.

He assists the Soul in all its devout Addresses to God as a Spirit of Prayer and Supplication. By him we draw near to the Father. He gives us to taste the pleasure of Religion, and prepares us daily for the full Enjoyment of God. He dwells in us as a living Spring of Holiness, and keeps alive his own Work in our Hearts through all the Oppositions of indwelling Sin, through all the various Temptations we meet with from Satan, and from this present World, till we are brought safe to the heavenly Kingdom. He gives all the final Strokes of Sanctification which may be needful at our Death, freeing us from every remaining Sin, and completing his own Work of Holiness in us. Then our blessed Mediator *Christ Jesus* at the Right-hand of God presents us without Spot or Blemish before the Presence

*sense of his own* and his Father's *Glory*, and gives us that sensible Enjoyment of those everlasting Pleasures he hath prepar'd for us in that holy and happy World.

Now the *Duties* that arise from this Account of *the Operations of the Holy Spirit*, are as follow.

In our Approaches to God in order to obtain Peace and Favour with him, we must pray, and wait, and hope for the divine Influences of this *blessed Spirit*, to convince us of Sin, to make us sincerely willing to be reconciled to God, to give us a clear and affecting sight of *Christ* in all the Power and Glory of his mediatorial Office, and to enable us to apply ourselves to *Christ* by a living Faith, that we may by him be brought into the Favour of God.

We must pray earnestly to the God of all Grace, that he would work deep and unfeigned Repentance in us by his holy Spirit, that his Spirit might change our Natures into his own Likeness, and restore his Image which is defaced by Sin; that he would send his Spirit to mortify all the corrupt Principles that are within us, to lead us into all needful Truth, and incline our Hearts with Power to the Practice of every Duty. We must ask that, he would assist us by his Spirit in all the holy and devout Exercises of our Souls, and enable us to worship God the *Father* aright through *Jesus Christ*, in all his own Appointments. We are to pray that the Spirit of God may preserve the divine Seed of Grace alive in our Souls, that he may recover us whenever we go astray from God, and carry on his own heavenly Work in us to Perfection.

We must seek and wait for the divine Influences of this blessed Spirit continually to give and to maintain Holiness and Comfort: and we must take the utmost religious Care lest at any time we grieve him, and cause him to depart by resisting his sacred Influences: And thus with a daily Dependence on  
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the Grace of the Holy Spirit, we must perpetually approach nearer to God both in the Temper of our Souls, and in holy Converse with him, till our State of Trial be finished, and till the Work of Holiness is compleat in Heaven.

'Tis a very natural Enquiry here, *Whether we may directly address ourselves in Prayer to the Son or the Spirit of God, to bestow these divine Influences upon us?* To which I answer, That the Scripture, which is indited by the Spirit himself, generally instructs us to make God *the Father* the more direct Object of our Addresses in Prayer, and to entreat the Father to bestow his Spirit on us, because 'tis he sustains the supreme Dignity and Majesty of Godhead, as the Lord and Sovereign of all, as the prime Agent in our Salvation, and prime Object of Worship. 'Tis *the Father of Lights that is the Giver of every good and perfect Gift*, Jam. i. 17. 'Tis *the Father that gives his Holy Spirit to them that ask it*, Luke xi. 13. 'Tis *the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*, to whom St. Paul bowed his Knees, that he would strengthen his Saints by his Spirit in the inner Man, Eph. iii. 16. And he prays that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of Glory, would give them the Spirit of Wisdom and Revelation, Eph. i. 17. 'Tis evident by the general Current of Scripture, both in its Counsels and in its Examples, that we are chiefly to seek the Aids of the blessed Spirit from God *the Father* through the Mediation of his Son *Christ Jesus*; and doubtless this always has been, and this will be the most usual Practice of Christians, who make the Word of God the Rule and Guide of their Worship\*.

\* As the second Person is consider'd as vested with the Office of Mediation, and the Holy Ghost as the Sanctifier and Comforter, so God the Father is in a peculiar manner the Object of our Faith, Love and Worship. So Peter tells us, 1 Pet. i. 21. *Through Christ we believe in God.* So writes Dr. Owen in his Sermons lately publish'd, and so all our Divines practise in their holy Ministrations.

Yet since Christ the *Son of God* has true Godhead belonging to him, and is a proper Object of Worship, since he is exalted to bestow the *promised Spirit* on Men, it cannot be improper to offer up our Addresses to Christ Jesus our Lord, to send us his Spirit according to his Promise. *I will send the Comforter to you from the Father*, John xv. 26. And 'tis manifest that in the Day of Temptation, St. Paul address'd our Lord *Jesus Christ* for Grace to resist it, 2 Cor. xii. 8, 9. And perhaps when he triumphed in this, that *the Power of Christ should rest upon him*, ver. 9. he means the *Spirit of Christ* in his powerful Influences to resist Temptation.

Now though it be generally agreed that there are no plain and express Precepts or Examples of Prayers or Praises so directly addressed to the *Holy Spirit* in all the New Testament, yet since the *Holy Spirit is true God*, since he is represented in Scripture in a personal Manner, or as a *divine Person*, and since in the sacred Oeconomy he is appointed to enlighten; to sanctify, and to comfort us, I think we may by just Inference derive sufficient Ground from Scripture upon some Occasions to offer Petitions to the Holy Spirit for his sacred Influences, and to give him Praise when we have receiv'd them. "Enlighten our  
"Darkness, O blessed Spirit, guide us into all  
"Truth: sanctify our sinful Natures, and fill us with  
"Joy and Hope in believing. Blessed be the Holy  
"Spirit of God for his divine Work that he has be-  
"gun in our Souls: may it be carried on and per-  
"fected unto the great Day."

Thus I have finished the *second* general Head of Discourse, and shewn that these are the glorious and divine Methods whereby such guilty and sinful Creatures as we *have Access to God the Father*: This is the Mediation of his Son *Jesus Christ*, who procures Peace and Reconciliation for us; and these are the inward and powerful Operations of his *Holy Spirit*, whereby our Hearts are reconciled to God, and  
train'd



train'd up to a Fitness for his heavenly Presence. *In that Presence there is a Divine Fulness of Joy, and at his right Hand are Pleasures for evermore.*

The third general Head contain'd in my Text, is *the Union of all Nations in this last and best of Religions,* which God ever taught the Children of Men: Both *Jews and Gentiles have Access to the Father in this Way,* i. e. through this one Mediator, and by one Spirit.

From the first Apostacy of *Adam* till the Days of *Abraham*, all the Forms and instituted Ordinances of Religion which were given to Men, were design'd as a general Instruction for all the Nations of the Earth, to shew them in what manner such guilty and sinful Creatures might have Access to God, and find Acceptance with him. And these Forms and Ordinances which were of such infinite Importance, should have been preserv'd alive by constant Tradition amongst all Mankind. Whatsoever divine Instructions God gave to *Adam* and *Noah*, were the appointed Methods of Worship and Access to God for all their Posterity, that is, for all the World, till God should reveal some new Methods to them; for each of those two Patriarchs were the Fathers of all Mankind; one before, and t'other after the Flood.

But when God called *Abraham*, he favoured him and his Household with peculiar Privileges, and appointed to them new and peculiar Forms of Worship and Access to himself. And here began the Distinction of the World into two Parts: Some were obliged to the Religion of *Abraham*, the rest left to the Religion of *Noah*. But as most of the Posterity of *Noah* soon forgot the true God, and degenerated into various Forms of Idolatry, so the Religion of *Abraham* was also for the most Part lost among the Families of *Ishmael* and the Sons of *Keturah*, and was chiefly retained and practis'd in the Household of *Isaac* and in the Tribes of *Jacob*, surnamed *Israel*.

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In the Days of *Moses* large Additions were made to the Religion of *Abraham*, and then the Family or Nation of *Israel* was in a special manner separated to be a peculiar People to God. Their Methods of access to God by Priests and Sacrifices, by Blood and Incense, by Sprinklings and Washings, were very numerous, and continued to be practised in the *Jewish* Nation for many Ages, even till the *Messiah* came, while the *Gentiles* had utterly lost the Religion of *Noah* their Father.

But here observe, that all the Rites and Ceremonies of Worship which were ever given to *Adam* or *Noah*, to *Abraham* or *Moses*, pointed to the great *Messiah*, and to the Religion of *Christ*. These Ceremonies had no Power to save, but by virtue of their relation to *Christ*, the Seed of the Woman, the great Reconciler who was to come. 'Twas therefore through the Mediation of *Christ*, and by the Influence of the *blessed Spirit* that *Adam*, *Noah*, *Abraham*, and *Israel*, that sinful Mankind in all Nations, and in all Ages, had ever any true access to God, or were receiv'd into his Favour; tho' the *Person and Offices of Christ* were, in those Days, conceal'd under Ceremonies, Figures and Shadows, and the *Influences of the blessed Spirit* were not quite so clearly reveal'd. To them was the Gospel preached as well as unto us, Gal. iii. 8. Heb. iv. 2. the same Gospel and the same Salvation, but cover'd with many Veils.

'Tis no wonder then that when *Christ* himself, the Son of God and of Man, the great Reconciler, was come into the World, and had reveal'd to Men, in a clearer Light, the Doctrine of his own Mediation, and taught and promised the necessary Influences of the Spirit of God; 'tis no wonder that all other instituted Rites and Forms of Worship should cease, which were only Figures and Signs of the glorious Religion of the New Testament. 'Tis no wonder that all Nations should be now required to draw  
near

near to God the *Father*, by the Mediation of *his own Son*, and through the Aids of *his own Spirit*: *All Nations*, I say, wheresoever the Sound of this Religion has reached, wheresoever this Gospel has been published to Mankind. This is the universal Rule of Approach to God for every sinful Man, in order to obtain the divine Favour. All other Forms are as it were dissolved and melted down into this one glorious Appointment: This is the divine Uniformity of Religion and Worship which God has now ordained among all his Saints. *Through one Lord Jesus*, both *Israel*, and the rest of the Nations must have Access by one Spirit unto the Father. By one Spirit we are all baptized into one Body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free, 1 Cor. xii. 13. And one Spirit where it prevails gloriously, will lead us into one Religion. As there is but one God and Father of all, so there must be but one Lord and Mediator, and one holy Spirit: there must be one Faith, one Hope, one Baptism, into the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, to whom be Glory and Praise for ever.

Let us conclude with *three Remarks* answerable to the three Things contain'd in my Text, which have been the distinct Heads of my Discourse.

Remark I. *With what rich Grace and Glory has God condescended to reveal himself to us in the New Testament!* 'Tis here God the Father appears eminently to begin and carry on the divine Affairs of his Kingdoms, of Nature, Providence and Grace, by his only begotten Son, and his eternal Spirit. 'Tis here we learn the great Mystery of Godliness, God manifest in the Flesh. 'Tis here God hath made known to us more of his own incomprehensible Nature, and his Ways of Operation among his Creatures, than ever the Light of Nature could find out, or than all the former Dispensations of Grace did clearly reveal. The great God, the Father of all, manifests himself as the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,

and

and in him as *our God and our Father*; hereby he descends into a nearer Relation to poor apostate Mankind, in order to restore them to his Favour and to his Image, to Holiness and eternal Peace. He approaches near to us in his Son *Jesus*, who is the *brightness of his Glory, and the express Image of his Person*. He approaches near us indeed, by sending his Son, who is one with himself, to dwell in Flesh; he comes down to us, and visits us by the Influences of his blessed *Spirit*, and causes our Souls to ascend toward him. What rich and condescending Love is this? By the same *Word*, and the same *Spirit*, by which he created the Heavens and the Earth, does he transact the grand and important Affair of Peace and Reconciliation with his guilty Creatures. How divinely glorious is this Doctrine of the blessed Trinity! And what an astonishing Favour is it, that the *sacred Three* should join in the Work of our Salvation!

Remark II. *How happily is the Gospel suited to the Recovery of fallen Man, by supplying all his Wants in a most divine manner?*

Is the great God offended by the Sin of Man? Behold, he takes upon him in the Gospel, the Name and Title of a *Father*, to invite perishing Rebels to return to his Mercy, and he employs his *Son* and his *Spirit*, to give Sinners a near access to himself.

Are we guilty Criminals, condemned Rebels, and afar off from God? Behold the Son of God himself, who is one with the Father, takes Flesh and Blood upon him, and so far becomes one of us, that he may sustain the Punishment of our Iniquities, and mediate a Peace between God and Sinners: and this he does by his powerful Intercession in the virtue of his bloody Sacrifice.

Is our Nature corrupted by Sin? Are we grown Strangers and Enemies to God by our continued Rebellions? Behold, the blessed Spirit of God comes



into our Hearts : His almighty Operations can enlighten our dark Minds, bend our obstinate Wills, change our corrupted Affections, and make us willing to return to God in his own Way, and to accept the Reconciliation. He sends his own Spirit to create us anew in his own Image, and make us fit for his Service and his Enjoyment.

We are by Nature Children of *Satan*, and Children of Wrath ; the great God becomes a *Father* to us : We are condemned, and the *Son of God* dwelling in the Flesh becomes a Reconciler : We are unholy, and the *Spirit of God* becomes our Sanctifier : We have destroy'd ourselves beyond all Possibility of created Help, and God himself becomes our Saviour, and He will be seen in every Part of our Salvation. a divine Father, a divine Reconciler, and a divine Sanctifier.

Remark III. *How well has the blessed God provided for Love and Union amongst all his true Worshipers!* He has left them no just Ground to contend and quarrel, or break themselves into little angry Parties, for he has now appointed but one Religion for them all, one general Method of Access to him. He has ordain'd but *one Mediator*, *Jesus Christ*, and has appointed one *Spirit*, to draw their Hearts near to himself. A glorious Religion indeed, that unites *Jews* and *Gentiles*, and Mankind of all Nations to the great and blessed God ! And what a Disgrace is it to this Religion, that we should not be more united to one another ? *We are no more Strangers and Foreigners, but Fellow-citizens with the Saints, and of the Household of God* : What a most absurd and grievous thing it is, that we who are brought into such a state of Friendship by divine Grace, should obey the corrupt Dictates of Nature, and the Lusts of the Flesh ! that we should Quarrel and Fight even in the Presence of that God to whom we have Access by the Blood of one Mediator, and by the Influence of one Spirit ! Surely this must be a Spirit of Union, and Peace, and

Love, this one Spirit which reconciles *God* and *Man*, who were at a dreadful Distance; this Spirit which reconciles *Jew* and *Gentile*, who were mutual Strangers and Enemies. And how can we suppose we are govern'd by this uniting Spirit, this Spirit of Gentleness, Meekness and Friendship, if we indulge the Ferments of Wrath and Revenge in our Bosom, if we resolve to carry on Strife and Contention with the Language of Railing, and Reviling against those who worship the same God by the same Mediator? How can we hope that this Spirit has ever reconciled us to God, if we persist in Enmity against our Brethren? Should we *have all Faith*, and *remove Mountains*, if *we have not Love*, we are not Christians, 1 Cor. xiii. 2. The very Nature and Life of Christianity, is *Faith working by Love*, Faith leading the Soul to God the Father through the Mediation of *Jesus Christ* his Son by the Aid of the Holy Spirit, and producing all works of Holiness by the Influence of love to God and Man. May this be wrought in our Hearts, and be practised in our whole course of Life!

#### THE RECOLLECTION.

Hast thou heard, O my Soul, hast thou learnt the glorious Discoveries that God has made of himself to fallen Creatures, and does not thy Heart rejoice within thee at the Sound of such a Doctrine, and such a Salvation? Has the blessed *God* reveal'd himself to thee in his beloved *Son*, and by his *Holy Spirit*? and does he invite thee to approach him as a *Father*, by such a divine *Mediator*, and such a divine *Sanctifier*? O let all the Powers of thy Nature submit with Joy to the Discoveries of such Grace. Go humble thyself before an offended God, who is willing to become a Father and a Friend: Go in the Name of *Jesus*, the great Mediator, and make thine Approaches to the Throne. Seek the Influences of  
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the *Holy Spirit* to enlighten thy dark Understanding, to conquer the Obstinacy of thy Will, and subdue all thy Affections to a sincere Compliance with this Method of divine Love: And let the constraining Force of this sweet Doctrine, unite thy Heart to all thy Fellow-Christians, who sincerely worship the same God, who seek for 'Acceptance through the Blood of the same Mediator, and who depend upon the Aids of the same Spirit.

Happy Day, when Faith, and Holiness, and Love, shall be found shining and reigning amongst all that profess the Religion of Christ! O when shall that promised Hour appear, that *the Lord Jehovah shall be King over all the Earth, and there shall be one Lord, and his Name one?* Zach. xiv. 9. Blessed *Jesus*, hast thou by thy Death broken down that middle Wall of Partition, that stood between the *Jews* and the *Gentiles*, hast thou reconciled both unto God in one Body by thy Cross, and slain the Enmity thereby? What wretched Creatures are we then to build up new Walls of Partition ourselves, by inventing and imposing new Forms of Faith and Worship, which thy Word has not taught us, and for which it has given us no Foundation! What wretched Creatures are we to raise up so many new Enmities in the Christian Church, and support them with fierce and implacable Zeal and Fury! This is to walk as *Enemies*, even to the Cross of Christ, and contrary to the compassionate Designs of a dying Saviour. One would think the Blood of the Son of God crucify'd should teach us kinder Lessons. O when shall all these Enmities be abolish'd by the over-powering Influence of the Spirit of Light and Love? When shall these unhappy Walls of Partition be broken down, and the whole Flock of Christ become one blessed Fold under *Jesus* the universal Shepherd? When shall we arrive at the perfect Unity of the Faith, and maintain the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Love? When shall the Glory and Beauty of the primitive Church

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be restored, where the *multitude of them that believed were of one Heart and one Soul*, united in one Faith and Hope, by the almighty Influences of one Spirit? Come, blessed Redeemer, come and accomplish thine own gracious Words of Promise: Let there be *one Fold and one Shepherd*; and let thy Blood and thy Spirit, by which we have Access to one God, even the Father, cement all our Hearts to each other in such an Union as shall never be dissolved. Then shall we join with all the Creation in one eternal Song, even the Song which thy Word has taught us: *Blessing, and Honour, and Glory, and Power, to him that sitteth upon the Throne, and to the Lamb, for ever and ever.* Amen.



H Y M N S







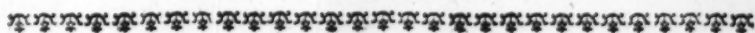
# H Y M N S

Composed on the

## S U B J E C T S

Of the foregoing

## S E R M O N S.



For S E R M O N XXIII.

*Gravity, Decency, &c.*

I.

**A**R'E we not Sons and Heirs of God?  
Are we not bought with *Jesus'* Blood?  
Do we not hope for heavenly Joys,  
And shall we stoop to trifling Toys?

II.

Can Laughter feed th' immortal Mind?  
Were Spirits of celestial Kind  
Made for a Jest, for Sport and Play,  
To wear out Time and waste the Day?

III.

Doth vain Discourse or empty Mirth  
Well suit the Honours of our Birth?  
Shall we be fond of gay Attire,  
Which Children love, and Fools admire?

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IV. What

## IV.

What if we wear the richest Vest,  
Peacocks and Flies are better drest:  
This Flesh, with all its gaudy Forms,  
Must drop to Dust, and feed the Worms.

## V.

Lord, raise our Hearts and Passions higher;  
Touch our vain Souls with sacred Fire;  
Then with an elevated Eye  
We'll pass these glittering Trifles by.

## VI.

We'll look on all the Toys below  
With such Disdain as Angels do,  
And wait the Call that bids us rise  
To promis'd Mansions in the Skies.

## For S E R M O N XXIV.

*Justice and Equity.*

## I.

COME, let us search our Ways, and try,  
Have they been just and right?  
Is the great Rule of Equity  
Our Practice and Delight?

## II.

What we would have our Neighbour do,  
Have we still done the same?  
And ne'er delay'd to pay his Due,  
Nor injur'd his good Name?

## III.

Do we relieve the Poor distress'd?  
Nor give our Tongues a loose,  
To make their Names our Scorn and Jest,  
Nor treat them with Abuse?

## IV.

Have we not found our Envy grow,  
To hear another's Praise?

Nor

Nor robb'd him of his Honour due  
By sly malicious Ways.

V.

In all we sell, and all we buy,  
Is Justice our Design?  
Do we remember God is nigh,  
And fear the Wrath divine?

VI.

In vain we talk of *Jesus*' Blood,  
And boast his Name in vain,  
If we can slight the Laws of God,  
And prove unjust to Men.

For S E R M O N XXV.

*Justice and Truth.*

I.

**G**REAT God, thy holy Law requires,  
To curb our covetous Desires,  
Forbids to Plunder, Steal or Cheat,  
To practise Falshood or Deceit.

II.

Thy Son hath set a Pattern too,  
He paid to God and Men their Due:  
A dreadful Debt he paid to God,  
And bought our Pardon with his Blood.

III.

Amazing Justice! Boundless Love!  
Do we not feel our Passions move?  
Do we not grieve that we have been  
Faithless to God, or false to Men?

IV.

Have we no righteous Debt deny'd,  
Thro' wanton Luxury or Pride?  
Nor vex the Poor with long Delay,  
And made them groan for want of Pay?

## V.

Have we ne'er thrown a needless Shame,  
Or Scandal, on our Neighbour's Name?  
O happy Men, whose Age and Youth  
Have ever dealt in Love and Truth!

## VI.

But if our Justice once be gone,  
And leave our Faith and Hope alone;  
If Honesty be banish'd hence,  
Religion is a vain Pretence.

## For SERMON XXVI.

*Temperance.*

## I.

**I**S it a Man's divinest Good,  
To make his Soul a Slave to Food,  
Vile as the Beast, whose Spirit dies,  
And has no Hope above the Skies?

## II.

Can Meats, or choicest Wines, procure  
Delights that ever shall endure?  
Was I not born above the Swine,  
And shall I make their Pleasures mine?

## III.

Am I not made for nobler Things?  
Made to ascend on Angels Wings?  
Shall my best Powers be thus debas'd,  
And part with Heaven to please my Taste?

## IV.

Can I forget the fatal Deed,  
How *Eve* brought Death on all her Seed?  
She tasted the forbidden Tree,  
Anger'd her God, and ruin'd me.

## V.

Was Life design'd alone to eat?  
What is the Mouth, or what the Meat?

Both



Both from the Ground derive their Birth,  
And both shall mix with common Earth.

## VI.

Great God, new-mould my sensual Mind,  
And let my Joys be more refin'd ;  
Raise me to dwell among the Blest,  
And fit me for thy heavenly Feast.

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## For SERMON XXVII.

*Chastity.*

## I.

**T**HE Lord, how great his Majesty !  
How pure are all his Ways !  
Sinners unclean offend his Eye,  
Nor stand before his Face.

## II.

Thou hast ordain'd immortal Woes,  
And everlasting Fire,  
To be the just Reward of those  
Who follow loose Desire.

## III.

I hear, I read the dreadful Doom  
Of *Sodom* in thy Word ;  
And dares a feeble Worm presume  
Thus to provoke the Lord ?

## IV.

Dear Saviour, guard me by thy Grace,  
From Thoughts and Words unclean,  
Nor let Temptation gain Success,  
To draw my Soul to Sin.

## For SERMON XXVIII.

*A lovely Carriage.*

## I.

O 'Tis a lovely Thing to see  
 A Man of prudent Heart,  
 Whose Thoughts, and Lips, and Life agree  
 To act a useful part.

## II.

When Envy, Strife, and Wars begin  
 In little angry Souls,  
 Mark how the Sons of Peace come in,  
 And quench the kindling Coals.

## III.

Their Minds are humble, mild and meek,  
 Nor let their Fury rise :  
 Nor Passion moves their Lips to speak,  
 Nor Pride exalts their Eyes,

## IV.

Their Frame is Prudence, mixt with Love ;  
 Good Works fulfil their Day ;  
 They join the Serpent with the Dove,  
 But cast the Sting away.

## V.

Such was the Saviour of Mankind,  
 Such Pleasures he pursu'd ;  
 His Flesh and Blood were all refin'd,  
 His Soul divinely good.

## VI.

Lord, can these Plants of Virtue grow  
 In such a Soul as mine ?  
 Thy Grace can form my Nature so,  
 And make my Heart like thine.

## For SERMON XXIX.

*Things of good Report.*

## I.

**I**S it a Thing of good Report,  
To squander Life and Time away?  
To cut the Hours of Duty short,  
While Toys and Follies waste the Day?

## II.

To ask and prattle all Affairs,  
And mind all Business but our own;  
To live at Random, void of Cares,  
While all Things to Confusion run?

## III.

Doth this become the *Christian* Name,  
To venture near the Tempter's Door?  
To sort with Men of evil Fame,  
And yet presume to stand secure?

## IV.

Am I my own sufficient Guard,  
While I expose my Soul to Shame?  
Can the short Joys of Sin reward  
The lasting Blemish of my Name?

## V.

O may it be my constant Choice  
To walk with Men of Grace below,  
'Till I arrive where heavenly Joys,  
And never-fading Honours grow!



## For SERMON XXX.

*Courage and Honour.*

## I.

DO I believe what *Jesus* saith,  
 And think his Gospel true?  
 Lord, make me bold to own my Faith,  
 And practise Virtue too.

## II.

Suppress my Shame, subdue my Fear,  
 Arm me with heavenly Zeal,  
 That I may make thy Power appear,  
 And Works of Praise fulfil.

## III.

If Men shall see my Virtue shine,  
 And spread my Name abroad,  
 Thine is the Power, the Praise is thine,  
 My Saviour and my God.

## IV.

Thus when the Saints in Glory meet,  
 Their Lips proclaim thy Grace,  
 They cast their Honours at thy Feet,  
 And own their borrow'd Rays.

## For SERMON XXXI.

*Holy Fortitude.*

## I.

AM I a Soldier of the Cross,  
 A Follower of the Lamb?  
 And shall I fear to own his Cause,  
 Or blush to speak his Name?

## II.

Must I be carry'd to the Skies  
 On flow'ry Beds of Ease,

While



While others fought to win the Prize,  
And fail'd through bloody Seas?

## III.

Are there no Foes for me to face?  
Must I not stem the Flood?  
Is this vile World a Friend to Grace,  
To help me on to God?

## IV.

Sure I must fight if I would reign:  
Increase my Courage, Lord:  
I'll bear the Toil, endure the Pain,  
Supported by thy Word.

## V.

Thy Saints in all this glorious War  
Shall conquer tho' they die;  
They see the Triumph from afar,  
And seize it with their Eye.

## VI.

When that illustrious Day shall rise,  
And all thy Armies shine,  
In Robes of Victory thro' the Skies,  
The Glory shall be thine.

## For S E R M O N XXXII.

*Remedies against Fear.*

## I.

**W**HEN Tumults of unruly Fear  
Rise in my Heart, and riot there,  
What shall I do to calm my Breast,  
And get the vexing Foe suppress?

## II.

What Power can these wild Thoughts controul,  
This ruffling Tempest of the Soul?  
Where shall I fly in this Distress,  
But to the Throne of glorious Grace?

III. My

## III.

My Faith would seize some Promise, Lord;  
 There's Power and Safety in thy Word:  
 Not all that Earth or Hell can say  
 Shall tempt or drive my Soul away.

## IV.

I call the Days of old to mind  
 When I have found my God was kind:  
 My heav'nly Friend is still the same;  
 Salvation to his holy Name.

## V.

Great God, preserve my Conscience clean,  
 Wash me from Guilt, forgive my Sin:  
 Thy Love shall guard me from Surprise,  
 Tho' threat'ning Dangers round me rise.

## VI.

When Fear, like a wild Ocean, raves,  
 Let Jesus walk upon the Waves,  
 And say, 'Tis I: that heav'nly Voice  
 Shall sink the Storm, and raise my Joys.

## For S E R M O N XXXIII.

*The universal Law of Equity.*

## I.

**B**lessed Redeemer, how divine,  
 How righteous is this Rule of thine,  
*Never to deal with others worse  
 Than we would have them deal with us!*

## II.

This golden Lesson short and plain,  
 Gives not the Mind nor Memory Pain:  
 And every Conscience must approve  
 This universal Law of Love.

## III.

'Tis written in each mortal Breast,  
 Where all our tenderest Wishes rest:

We

We draw it from our inmost Veins,  
Where Love to self resides and reigns.

## IV.

Is Reason ever at a Loss?  
Call in Self-love to judge the Cause.  
Let our own fondest Passion shew  
How we should treat our Neighbours too.

## V.

How blest would every Nation prove,  
Thus rul'd by Equity and Love!  
All would be Friends, without a Foe,  
And form a Paradise below.

## VI.

*Jesus*, forgive us that we keep  
Thy sacred Law of Love asleep,  
And take our Envy, Wrath and Pride,  
Those savage Passions, for our Guide.

## For SERMON XXXIV.

*The Atonement of Christ.*

## I.

**H**OW is our Nature spoil'd by Sin!  
Yet Nature ne'er hath found  
The way to make the Conscience clean,  
Or heal the painful Wound.

## II.

In vain we seek for Peace with God  
By Methods of our own:  
*Jesus*, there's nothing but thy Blood  
Can bring us near the Throne.

## III.

The Threat'nings of the broken Law  
Impress our Souls with Dread:  
If God his Sword of Vengeance draw,  
It strikes our Spirits dead.

IV. But

## IV.

But thine illustrious Sacrifice  
 Hath answer'd these Demands:  
 And Peace and Pardon from the Skies  
 Come down by *Jesus'* Hands.

## V.

Here all the antient *Types* agree,  
 The Altar and the Lamb:  
 And *Prophets* in their Visions see  
 Salvation thro' his Name.

## VI.

'Tis by thy Death we live, O Lord;  
 'Tis on thy Cross we rest:  
 For ever be thy Love ador'd,  
 Thy Name for ever blest.

## For SERMON XXXV.

*Faith and Repentance encouraged by the Sacrifice of*  
 CHRIST.

## I.

**W**Here shall the guilty Conscience go  
 To find a sure Relief?  
 Can bleeding Bulls or Goats bestow  
 A Balm to ease my Grief?

## II.

Will Popish Rites and Penances  
 Release my Soul from Sin?  
 What insufficient Things are these  
 To calm the Wrath divine!

## III.

God, the great God, who rules the Skies,  
 The Gracious and the Just,  
 Makes his own Son our Sacrifice:  
 And there lies all our Trust.

## IV. O



## IV.

O never let my Tho'ts renounce  
The Gospel of my God,  
Where vilest Crimes are cleans'd at once  
In *Christ's* atoning Blood.

## V.

Here rest my Faith, and ne'er remove ;  
Here let Repentance rise,  
While I behold his bleeding Love,  
His dying Agonies.

## VI.

With Shame and Sorrow here I own  
How great my Guilt hath been :  
This is my way t'approach the Throne,  
And God forgives my Sin.

## For SERMON XXXVI.

*Christ's Propitiation improv'd.*

## I.

**L**ORD, didst thou send thy Son to dye  
For such a guilty Wretch as I ?  
And shall thy Mercy not impart  
Thy Spirit to renew my Heart ?

## II.

Lord, hast thou wash'd my Garments clean  
In *Jesus'* Blood from Shame and Sin ?  
Shall I not strive with all my Power  
That Sin pollute my Soul no more !

## III.

Shall I not bear my Father's Rod,  
The kind Corrections of my God,  
When *Christ* upon the cursed Tree  
Sustain'd a heavier Load for me ?

## IV.

Why should I dread my dying Day  
Since *Christ* hath took the Curse away,  
And taught me with my latest Breath  
To triumph o'er thy Terrors, *Death* ?

K k

V. O

## V.

O rather let me wish and cry,  
 " When shall my Soul get loose and fly  
 " To upper Worlds? When shall I see  
 " the God, the Man, that dy'd for me."

## VI.

I shall behold his Glories there,  
 And pay him my eternal Share  
 Of Praise, and Gratitude, and Love,  
 Among ten thousand Saints above.

## For S E R M O N XXXVII.

*A Christian's Treasure: All things are yours, whether  
 Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, &c.*

## I.

**H**OW vast the Treasure we possess!  
 How rich thy Bounty, King of Grace!  
 This World is ours, and Worlds to come:  
 Earth is our Lodge, and Heav'n our Home.

## II.

*Paul* is our Teacher: while he speaks,  
 The Shadows flee, the Morning breaks;  
 His Words like Beams of Knowledge shine,  
 And fill our Souls with Light divine.

## III.

*Cephas* is ours: he makes us feel  
 The Kindlings of celestial Zeal:  
 While sweet *Apollos'* charming Voice  
 Gives us a Taste of heav'nly Joys.

## IV.

The springing Corn, the stately Wood,  
 Grow to provide us House and Food:  
 Fire, Air, Earth, Water, join their Force;  
 All Nature serves us in her Course.

## V.

The Sun rows round to make our Day;  
 The Moon directs our nightly Way;  
 While Angels bear us in their Arms,  
 And shield us from ten thousand Harms.

## VI.

O glorious Portion of the Saints!  
 Let Faith suppress our sore Complaints,  
 And tune our Hearts and Tongues to sing  
 Our bounteous God, our sovereign King.

---

 For SERMON XXXVIII.

*All Things working for Good.*

## I.

**M**Y Soul, survey thy Happiness,  
 If thou art found a Child of Grace,  
 How richly is the Gospel stor'd!  
 What Joy the Promises afford!

## II.

*All Things are ours*; The Gift of God,  
 And purchas'd with our Saviour's Blood:  
 While the good Spirit shews us how  
 To use and to enjoy them too.

## III.

If Peace and Plenty crown my Days,  
 They help me, Lord, to speak thy Praise:  
 If Bread of Sorrows be my Food,  
 Those Sorrows work my real Good.

## IV.

I would not change my blest Estate  
 With all that Flesh calls *Rich* or *Great*:  
 And while my Faith can keep her Hold,  
 I envy not the Sinner's Gold.

## V.

Father, I wait thy daily Will,  
 Thou shalt divide my Portion still:  
 Grant me on Earth what seems thee best,  
 'Till Death and Heaven reveal the rest.

---

 For SERMON XXXIX.

*The true Improvement of Life.*

## I.

**A**ND is this Life prolong'd to me?  
 Are Days and Seasons given?

K k 2

Shall

Shall I not then prepare to be  
A fitter Heir for Heav'n?

II.

I'll never let these Moments pass,  
These golden Hours be gone:  
Lord, I accept thine offer'd Grace,  
I bow before thy Throne.

III.

Now cleanse my Soul from every Sin  
By my Redeemer's Blood:  
Now let my Flesh and Heart begin  
The Honours of my God.

IV.

Let me no more my Soul defile  
With Sin's deceitful Toys:  
Let cheerful Hope encreasing still  
Approach to heav'nly Joys.

V.

My thankful Lips shall loud proclaim  
The Wonders of thy Praise,  
And spread the Savour of thy Name  
Where-e'er I spend my Days.

VI.

On Earth let my Example shine:  
And when I leave this State,  
May Heaven receive this Soul of mine  
To Bliss divinely great.

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For S E R M O N XL.

*The Privilege of the Living above the Dead.*

I.

**A** W A K E my Zeal, awake my Love,  
And serve my Saviour here below,  
In Works which all the Saints above,  
Which holy Angels cannot do.

II.

My Faith and Hope may see the Lord,  
Tho' Veils of Darkness lie between:  
Hope shall rest firm upon his Word,  
And Faith rejoice in Things unseen.

III. Awake



## III.

Awake my Charity, and feed  
 The hungry Soul, and clothe the Poor:  
 In Heav'n are found no Sons of Need,  
 There all these Duties are no more.

## IV.

Subdue thy Passions, O my Soul,  
 Maintain the Fight, thy Work pursue,  
 Daily thy rising Sins controul,  
 And be thy Vict'ries ever new.

## V.

The Land of Triumph lies on high,  
 There are no Fields of Battle there:  
 Lord, I would conquer 'till I dye,  
 And finish all the glorious War.

## VI.

Let every flying Hour confess  
 I gain thy Gospel fresh Renown,  
 And when my Life and Labours cease,  
 May I possess the promis'd Crown.

## For SERMON XLI.

*Death of Mankind, Saints and Sinners, improv'd.*

## I.

**H**AS Death such vast Destruction made?  
 Does every Hour increase the Dead?  
 Here I behold the Guilt of Sin,  
 That brought this spreading Mischief in.

## II.

Great God! How awful and how just  
 Thy Law, that turns our Flesh to Dust!  
 O let me learn how frail am I,  
 And all my Life prepare to dye.

## III.

When impious Wretches yield their Breath,  
 And go unpardon'd down to Death,  
 Awake, my Soul, adore the Grace  
 That gave thee a repenting Space.

IV. But

## IV.

But when a Saint with chearful Air  
Meets his last Foe, and feels no Fear,  
Our Faith, our Hope, and Courage grow ;  
We learn to face the Tyrant too.

## V.

We could renounce our all Things here,  
And wish that Moment would appear  
When we shall leave this World, and rise  
To meet the Joys above the Skies.

## For SERMON XLII.

*Death of Kindred improv'd.*

## I.

**M**UST Friends and Kindred drop and dye ?  
Must Helpers be withdrawn ?  
While Sorrow with a weeping Eye  
Counts up our Comforts gone.

## II.

Be thou our Comfort, mighty God,  
Our Helper and our Friend :  
Nor leave us in this dang'rous Road  
'Till all our Trials end.

## III.

O may our Feet pursue the Way  
Our pious Fathers led !  
While Love and holy Zeal obey  
The Counsels of the Dead.

## IV.

Let us be wean'd from all below ;  
Let Hope our Grief dispel ;  
Death will invite our Souls to go  
Where our best Kindred dwell.

## For S E R M O N XLIII.

*Death a Blessing to the Saints.*

## I.

**D**O Flesh and Nature dread to dye?  
And timorous Thoughts our Minds enslave?  
But Grace can raise our Hopes on high,  
And quell the Terrors of the Grave.

## II.

What! Shall we run to gain the Crown,  
Yet grieve to think the Goal so near?  
Afraid to have our Labours done,  
And finish this important War.

## III.

Do we not dwell in Clouds below,  
And little know the God we love?  
Why should we like this Twilight so,  
When 'tis all Noon in Worlds above?

## IV.

There shall we see him Face to Face,  
There shall we know the *Great Unknown*:  
And *Jesus*, with his glorious Grace,  
Shines in full Light amidst the Throne.

## V.

When we put off this fleshly Load,  
We're from a thousand Mischiefs free,  
For ever present with our God,  
Where we have long'd and wish'd to be.

## VI.

No more shall Pride or Passion rise,  
Or Envy fret, or Malice roar,  
Or Sorrow mourn with down cast Eyes,  
And Sin defile our Souls no more.

## VII.

'Tis best, 'tis infinitely best  
To go where Tempters cannot come,  
Where Saints and Angels, ever blest,  
Dwell and enjoy their heavenly Home.

## VIII. O

## VIII.

O for a Visit from my God,  
 To drive my Fears of Death away,  
 And help me thro' this darksome Road  
 To Realms of everlasting Day!

## For S E R M O N XLIV.

*The Doctrine of the Trinity, and the Use of it : Or, Ac-  
 cess to the Father through Christ by the Holy Spirit.*

## I.

F Ather of Glory, to thy Name  
 Immortal Praise we give,  
 Who dost an Act of Grace proclaim,  
 And bid us Rebels live.

## II.

Immortal Honour to the Son  
 Who makes thine Anger cease ;  
 Our Lives he ransom'd with his own,  
 And dy'd to buy our Peace.

## III.

To thy almighty Spirit be  
 Immortal Glory giv'n,  
 Whose Influence brings us near to thee,  
 And trains us up for Heav'n.

## IV.

Let Men, with their united Voice,  
 Adore th' Eternal God,  
 And spread his Honours and their Joys  
 Thro' Nations far Abroad.

## V.

Let Faith, and Love, and Duty join,  
 One general Song to raise,  
 And Saints in Earth and Heaven combine  
 In Harmony and Praise.

F I N I S.

